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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: DAVID ADAMS

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Tuesday,
 October 17, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 11:05 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL PATTERSON
Central Boat Rentals
Morgan City, Louisiana

GARY GAUDET
Central Boat Rentals

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

HARRY SCHWARTZ
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JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

TERRY MIRE
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

RUFUS HARRIS
Harris and Rufty

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:05 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Good morning. It's 11:05. This is Morgan Turrell, National Transportation Safety Board. We're in the U.S. Coast Guard, Morgan City, Louisiana. We're interviewing Mr. David Adams and Mr. Gary Gaudet of Central Boat Rentals. My first name is Morgan, last name Turrell. And to my left?

MR. PATTERSON: Michael Patterson, with Central Boat Rentals, M I C H A E L, P A T T E R S O N.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron.

MR. MIRE: Terry Mire (ph.) with Chevron.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, with Athena.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

MR. GAUDET: Gary Gaudet, Central Boat Rentals.

MR. HARRIS: Rufus Harris, Harris and Rufty.

MR. ADAMS: David Adams, Central Boat Rentals.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. We'll get started with Mr. Adams first in just a moment.

INTERVIEW OF DAVID ADAMS

1 BY MR. TURRELL:

2 Q. Mr. Adams, would you please tell us how old you are?

3 A. I'm 46 years old.

4 Q. And in what city and state do you reside?

5 A. Patterson, Louisiana.

6 Q. Okay. And what's your employment?

7 A. I work for Central Boat Rentals as a Safety Manager.

8 Q. How long have you held that job?

9 A. Three years and three, four months.

10 Q. And can give us your professional history before
11 Central Boat?

12 A. Sure. I earned my Master's Degree. From there, I
13 taught at a few different private colleges, a little high
14 school briefly. From there, in '90, '91, I was employed with
15 Young Memorial Technical College as a Technical Studies
16 Instructor where I began teaching safety courses. From there I
17 got on with Galaxy Marine in Patterson, and they were bought
18 out shortly thereafter by Sea Corps Marine (ph.) and I worked
19 with Sea Corps for seven years, until 2003, when I got on with
20 Central Boat.

21 Q. And in what capacity do you work at Central Boat?

22 A. Safety Manager.

23 Q. Safety Manager. Can you tell us a description of
24 what the day-to-day responsibilities of Safety Manager at
25 Central Boat entails?

1 A. Vessel visits, maintain overall safety. I mean it
2 varies from day to day obviously, you know. If there's
3 incidents occurring, I'll take care of that, putting out some
4 fires, some training, just depending on what needs to be done.
5 It's going to vary from day to day.

6 Q. Okay. Can you give us your account of what your
7 experience was last Thursday, October 12th?

8 A. Sure. Like everyone, I was having lunch. I received
9 a phone call right around -- about 12:15, told me what
10 happened, that, you know, the boat was on fire, people missing.
11 I started asking questions. Couldn't answer any questions.
12 So I rushed to the office. From there, I made sure on the way
13 to the office, I did call the operations guy and informed him
14 to call the Coast Guard as quickly as possible. When I got to
15 the office, operations was there, a couple of operations
16 people. Mike showed up and we started -- also on the way to
17 the office I did call our adjuster, insurance people as well.
18 Sat down. We made some phone calls, as much as we could. I
19 was concerned about our people on the vessel obviously and was
20 just trying to get the communication going as fast as possible,
21 is what we were trying to do, what I was concerned about. The
22 people in the field actually had a problem going on, and we
23 were sitting in Patterson not knowing what exactly was going
24 on. So after a few minutes, decided it was best, I'll just
25 start heading that way which is what I did. I was also in

1 contact with the Coast Guard in New Orleans because they had
2 dispatched a helicopter and I believe an airplane. While on
3 the way to Ivanhoe or Cypremort Point, either way, I was
4 informed that one of our crewmembers, Rodney, had been taken to
5 Iberia. So I just went ahead and proceeded to Iberia General
6 in New Iberia.

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. When I got there, two Sheriff Department personnel
9 were in there speaking to him, trying to find out what was
10 going on. I talked to Rodney a little bit, interviewed him a
11 little bit, and after about 45, 50 minutes or so, maybe an
12 hour, his wife showed up and he was released and watched him
13 walk out, got in the car, and actually went to get his
14 medication down the street at the Rite Aid. And then from
15 there, I met another operations manager in New Iberia and we
16 rode and went to Tim Tossin's (ph.) parents' house, and
17 discussed the matter with them. From there, we went to the
18 local Wal-Mart and met Tim Tossin's daughter and had a
19 discussion with her.

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. And from there, we rode back to Franklin and that
22 night Patterson and went down to Cypremort Point to see what
23 was going on.

24 Q. Okay. Did you know the crewmembers very well
25 involved?

1 A. Fairly well.

2 Q. How much contact did you have with Captain Tossin on
3 a day-to-day basis?

4 A. Maybe not so much day-to-day but week to week, two
5 weeks, a week, you know, 32 boats, I'd make a point to talk to
6 all of, you know, talk and know all of my crewmembers.

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. I knew Rocky pretty well. I visit with
9 (indiscernible) all the time, as much as I could.

10 Q. What can you tell us about Captain Tossin?

11 A. Good captain, jovial, always happy, give you the
12 shirt off his back, safety conscious, took care of business.

13 Q. Any, any problems or disciplinary matters --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- occur?

16 A. No. Very cooperative. From the day I started with
17 Central, he was always cooperative. He always knew there was
18 changes, you know, one thing we can count on is changes, and a
19 safety person coming in, implementing certain things and, you
20 know, he was receptive to it.

21 Q. Okay. Do you recall the last formal company training
22 that Captain Tossin participated in or a company program of any
23 kind?

24 A. Maybe Homeland Security training.

25 Q. Do you know roughly when that might have been?

- 1 A. A year or two ago. Maybe two years ago.
- 2 Q. Do you guys have training records?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. Do you keep track of all this?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Okay. Now can you tell us about Captain Tossin's
- 7 habits, driving the boat? Is there any particular style he --
- 8 A. No --
- 9 Q. -- anything you can characterize?
- 10 A. -- none that I'm aware of.
- 11 Q. Had you ever actually been on board the boat with him
- 12 operating it?
- 13 A. Just around the dock.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. When I would go to visit ship to barge, once or
- 16 twice. At that time, I mean he would, you know, he would, of
- 17 course, with a safety man there, you know, he would make a
- 18 point to, you know, always insure that the deckhand had his
- 19 PPEs on and was always instructing them about the bump, you
- 20 know, watch out for the bump when the barge hits the side.
- 21 Q. Okay. What can you tell us about Mr. Lewis?
- 22 A. Character.
- 23 Q. Everything.
- 24 A. I mean a character.
- 25 Q. He's a character. Okay.

1 A. No, he's a good guy. He and Tim were very close.
2 They were somewhat compatible. You know, you live in tight
3 quarters and you have to get along, and they were two peas on a
4 pod so to speak. They got along well. Rocky would listen. He
5 would be attentive. He knew what he had to do. Once again, he
6 modeled after Tim, he always wore his PPEs, he was safety
7 conscious because I would stay on, take care of business,
8 that's what they had to do.

9 Q. Can you tell us about any company policy you have in
10 regards to say smoking or what the company policy is?

11 A. Cigarettes?

12 Q. Cigarettes.

13 A. Yeah, we do have a policy in the safety manual. We
14 do have a safety manual on board all vessels. There is a
15 particular policy. I do believe I wrote that one.

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. If you want to know -- do you want to know specifics?

18 Q. No, we can look at it when you provide it to us.
19 Just generally speaking, do you have a policy, and what's the
20 general nature of that policy as far as --

21 A. Cigarettes.

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. No smoking in the state rooms, no smoking in the
24 engine rooms or in hazardous areas obviously, and what we do is
25 a lot of -- unfortunately a lot of people in our business smoke

1 cigarettes on the vessels. So, you know, we prohibit smoking
2 in certain areas, shore areas, Coast Guard areas, state rooms,
3 whatever, and in the galley, there's no smoking when people are
4 trying to eat.

5 Q. And to your knowledge, do you know if Rodney or Tim
6 smoked?

7 A. Neither one of them smoked.

8 Q. Do you, to your knowledge, know the work schedule
9 that these gentlemen worked in the last few days?

10 A. I know that Rodney went on the Wednesday before, is
11 that correct? Yeah, I believe he went on the Wednesday before.

12 Q. Okay. So he started work --

13 A. Rodney normally crew changed on a Thursday. He went
14 to Wednesday afternoon or evening before.

15 Q. Okay. And Captain Tossin?

16 A. I'm not quite sure of his exact work schedule.

17 Q. Okay. How many employees do you oversee in the
18 safety program?

19 A. 170, 175.

20 Q. Uh-huh. And just generally, what kind of programs do
21 you monitor or manage?

22 A. Okay. We have, we have all vessels and other
23 personnel are required to attend and complete a weekly safety
24 meeting, okay.

25 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. What we do is we work with all the majors in the
2 industry. So we know what is required with Chevron and BP, et
3 cetera. So what we're basically looking at is 23 OSHA topics.
4 Okay. They do that. They also are required to do monthly
5 fire drills. Another program that we instituted was behavior
6 based safety process called Choose --

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. -- where the crewmembers do observations, announced
9 observations on one another, to observe safety and risk
10 behaviors. More safety things.

11 Q. That's okay. To your knowledge, have either of these
12 employees taken a drug test or -- in the last 12 months?

13 A. I don't know the schedule.

14 Q. Do you know of any failed drugs tests?

15 A. No, no, no. They may have. I --

16 Q. You don't know of any. You don't know of any failed
17 drug tests?

18 A. No. I know they have taken some. I've seen some. I
19 know they haven't failed.

20 MR. TURRELL: Liam.

21 MR. TURRELL: Liam Larue, NTSB.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. I just have a couple of questions. The first one, if
24 you can try and think back to that first conversation you had
25 with Rodney at the hospital, just try and remember anything he

1 might have told you in that conversation?

2 A. I asked him what happened and, you know, he, you
3 know, what happened. He was standing on the barge and he
4 did -- the first question I asked was, was the vessel moving,
5 and he said yes. And I said what happened? He said the spud
6 fell. He made a certain sound like whoosh or swoosh, something
7 like that, when the spud fell. And -- I don't remember
8 everything. I kept asking him, because once again the two
9 Sheriffs were there, and those two Sheriffs really didn't know,
10 they didn't really know anything about vessels and I kind of
11 started asking questions, and they found it amazing, you know.
12 Just, you know, what happened, and he was really short. If you
13 guys met Rodney, he's pretty short and brief and he's to the
14 point, yes, no, this, that and it's over with, and he jumped in
15 the water and that was it.

16 Q. We've established in other interviews that these
17 vessels have some sort of fire fighting capabilities. Do you
18 know if they put out fire in these fields on the vessels? Do
19 you know if they used this?

20 A. On the vessels or in the field?

21 Q. Both.

22 A. Well, once again, I'm not really that aware of in the
23 field, but on the vessels, no, it's a rarity if there's a fire.
24 The crewmembers stay on top this. You have to remember, we
25 preach safety and we want to follow safety rules and reporting

1 procedures is very important. I don't know any captains who
2 want to be on an unsafe vessel. Any deficiencies they'll
3 report to us and insure that we correct it in a timely manner.

4 Q. Does part of that safety training include fire
5 fighting type activities or --

6 A. Yes. That's why I was part of it. We had to put the
7 fire pumps and the pull stations and you had the fire alarm
8 system on there, and the fire extinguishers is all part of it.

9 Q. And if there was a fire on one of these boats, you
10 know, out in the oil field somewhere, would this be recorded
11 anywhere or reported to you or anyone?

12 A. Yes. My biggest thing is reporting procedures.
13 Everybody knows that if anything happens, I want to know
14 everything. So, yes, something major. Even minor, you know,
15 they should report it.

16 Q. Thank you.

17 MR. LARUE: That's all I have.

18 MR. TURRELL: Tom.

19 MR. MARCOTTE: I have no questions.

20 MR. TURRELL: Harry?

21 MR. SCHWARTZ: No questions.

22 MR. TURRELL: Brian?

23 MR. OSBORN: I have no questions.

24 MR. TURRELL: John.

25 LT. LUFF: No questions.

1 MR. TURRELL: Chevron?

2 MR. MARCOTTE: No questions.

3 MR. MIRE: I have no questions.

4 BY MR. TURRELL:

5 Q. Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

6 A. No.

7 Q. If you would just acknowledge that his recorded and
8 I'll stop the interview.

9 A. I understand this has been recorded.

10 MR. TURRELL: Thank you.

11 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
12 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
with Natural Gas Line,
West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
October 12, 2006
Interview of David Adams

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 17, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

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Interview of: BRIAN PAUL DUMESNIL

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Saturday,
 October 14, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 10:40 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL PATTERSON
Central Boat Rentals
Morgan City, Louisiana

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DRAKE STANSBURY
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

BRAD SCHLOTTERER
Kean, Miller, Hawthorne, D'Armond,
McCowan and Jarman
Counsel for Athena Construction

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E X H I B I T SEXHIBIT NUMBERFOR IDENTIFICATION

Brian Exhibit 1

32

I N T E R V I E W

(10:40 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Good morning. This is Morgan Turrell, National Transportation Safety Board. We're in Morgan City, Louisiana, at the U.S. Coast Guard Station. We're interviewing Mr. Brian Paul Dumesnil, and it's 12:40, excuse me, it's 10:40, and we're going to conduct the interview of one of the survivors of the Miss Megan accident that occurred on October 12.

And to my left?

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB, Engineering Investigator.

MR. PATTERSON: Michael Patterson, Central Boat Rentals, M I C H A E L, P A T T E R S O N. We're located here in Morgan City.

MR. STANSBURY: Drake Stansbury, D R A K E, S T A N S B U R Y, Athena Construction, Morgan City, Louisiana.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, that's B R I A N, O S B O R N, with Gulfport Energy, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron, M A R C O T T E, Lafayette, Louisiana.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, Coast Guard, Marine Safety, Morgan City Investigation Division. Last name, L U F F.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB, L I A M, L A R U E.

1 MR. LEE: Dana Lee, D A N A, L E E, Athena
2 Construction, Morgan City, Louisiana.

3 MR. SCHLOTTERER: Brad Schlotterer, S C H L O T T E R
4 E R, Kean Miller, acting as counsel for Athena.

5 MR. TURRELL: And you're representing Mr. Dumesnil
6 this morning. Is that correct?

7 MR. SCHLOTTERER: Yes.

8 INTERVIEW OF BRIAN PAUL DUMESNIL

9 BY MR. TURRELL:

10 Q. Brian, good morning. If you would just go ahead and
11 give me your name and your city and state of residence.

12 A. Brian Paul Dumesnil, born and raised Franklin,
13 Louisiana, address, [REDACTED], employed by Athena.

14 Q. Okay. And would you just go ahead and spell your
15 name for me please?

16 A. B R I A N, Paul, P A U L, Dumesnil, D U M E S N I L.

17 Q. Thank you. And, sir, would you just tell us your age
18 please?

19 A. Twenty-five years old.

20 Q. And would you tell us what -- what your role in this
21 incident was?

22 A. Pretty much a hand on a pile driving barge and on a
23 lay barge.

24 Q. Okay. So you were employed by Athena on the
25 construction barge?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And what time did you start work that morning?

3 A. I caught the second boat. One of our crew boats were
4 down, like an engine was out of it, and we left the dock at
5 8:00, 8:00, somewhere around 8:30, something like that.

6 Q. Okay. And how long have you worked for Athena?

7 A. Going on six months.

8 Q. And what's your general employment history after,
9 after high school, and in general what your employment history
10 had been?

11 A. Employment history, I've worked with the Parish,
12 building roads and recreation and I stayed there a couple of
13 years and then I went to construction with Berry Brothers.

14 Q. At which parish?

15 A. Berry Brothers.

16 Q. How do you spell that? I'm sorry.

17 A. B E R R Y, Brothers.

18 Q. Do you know what parish that was in?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: St. Mary's Parish.

20 MR. TURRELL: St. Mary's Parish. Okay.

21 BY MR. TURRELL:

22 Q. So you worked at St. Mary's Parish doing civic work,
23 construction and roads you said?

24 A. At the Parish.

25 Q. At the Parish.

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. And then you worked for Berry Brothers after that?

3 A. Yeah. Yes, sir.

4 Q. All right. If you'll just give us -- I know you've
5 already given the Coast Guard a statement and your employer.
6 So if you would just kindly take us through that -- take us
7 through the day before the accident, as best you can recall.
8 Tell us, you know, like when you went to sleep and when you
9 woke up, and just kind of take us through briefly the day
10 before, and as much detail as possible the day of.

11 A. The day before, I wake up like I always do and go to
12 work. They pick me up at the truck stop in Franklin. It's so
13 far for me to drive, and we head out to Ivanhoe Landing and it
14 takes us out to catch our crew boat.

15 Q. Could you speak up just a little bit for the
16 recording. I'd appreciate it.

17 A. We head out to the Ivanhoe to catch our crew boat,
18 the Captain Mitch or Mary Ellen. And we catch our 30 minutes,
19 40 minute ride out there and then, you know, they back up to
20 the barges and we get off and we start to do our thing, you
21 know. And the day before, I believe was pulling pilings. We
22 have a vibrating hammer, one of those vibrating hammers for
23 pilings and we did that pretty much all day and the next day --

24 Q. When did you stop work that day? What, what -- you
25 said you pulled pilings all day until what time?

1 A. Around 4:30.

2 Q. 4:30. And the crew boat brings you back and then
3 they drop you back off at the truck stop?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. And what time did you return home?

6 A. 5:30, something.

7 Q. Okay. So from 5:30 the night before, continue.

8 A. And then the next day --

9 Q. What time did you go to bed say at that point?

10 A. About 9:30.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Wake up -- since we caught the second boat, I woke up
13 at 5:30.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And they met me at the truck stop about 6:20. John
16 would drive in the mornings. Kenny would ride in the passenger
17 seat but Kenny had caught a cold and, you know, he couldn't see
18 that good. They would pick up -- they would pick me up and
19 then we would head out to Ivanhoe Landing and catch the crew
20 boat.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It's pretty much repetitious, the same thing, you
23 know. We'd go out on the barge, get ready. Some of us, you
24 know, we'd go check the oil in the spud unit. John would go
25 check the crane, you know, do everything, make sure everything

1 was working right. And, you know, our supervisor, Kenny, would
2 line us with what we had to do. And they'd dog off the crane,
3 undog it. And that morning, we didn't have a tug with us, and
4 we had been waiting for a tug which was the Miss Megan because
5 it was pushing Billy's barge around us and once he unhooked
6 from him, he was coming to get us and we were going to be in
7 tow, and so we vibrated some more pilings until the tug was
8 coming to get us and they called Kenny on the Nextel and they
9 said we're coming to get you all next. So we -- I laid the
10 hammer down, laid the vibrating hammer down and unhooked from
11 the block. You know, we had a two part line hooked up to use
12 the vibrating hammers on these pilings and laid that down and
13 the crew boat hooked up to us, and I was the spud man on the
14 barge. I unhooked the spuds, drop them because pretty much the
15 other hands, I don't know if they just didn't want to learn it,
16 but they didn't really know how to release them and pick them
17 up. So I picked the spuds up, it was fine, you know,
18 everything was good, and it was about quarter to 12:00, almost
19 lunchtime, Kenny came up to me, he said, you all go eat lunch
20 and, you know, before we get to the rig, because we were going
21 to drop some pilings around a rig, and so we all went in the
22 doghouse. It was me, Terry, Cleveland Tardy, and Rocky, one of
23 the deckhands, he came on the barge, and he was kind of just,
24 you know, you know, being friendly like he always was, talking
25 to everybody. And I finished eating my food and I called my

1 mother to see what she had cooking for supper, and I was
2 talking to her and all of a sudden, the back spud just free
3 falls down like, bam, you know, I just see the spool burning,
4 acting like a fishing pool, you know. And so I walk out the
5 doghouse and, you know, I didn't see anybody on the spud unit.
6 So I'm like who dropped the spud or whatever, and I looked back
7 at the tugboat. Well, actually it -- a big burst came from off
8 the side of the barge, right beside the doghouse, right where
9 the spud was, but in between the spud and the back, right by
10 the doghouse, and by that time, there was flames and water was
11 just going everywhere and, you know, I ducked and looked back
12 and the boat was in flames. You know, I seen Tim. Tim was in
13 front of the wheelhouse and, you know, and he was screaming and
14 he was burning alive, man, and I didn't know what to do. Then
15 John was on the side of me and he said run, you know, and I
16 ran, you know, I ran to, we call it the front of the barge
17 where the crane was, and when I got to the end of the crane, me
18 and him stopped, and I said, John, what do I do, man? Where I
19 go? What do I do? And he, he didn't know what to tell me,
20 like he was in shock, you know, like I was, and so -- and
21 what's his name, Chicken, we call him Chicken, Albert, Albert
22 came and he bumped into me, and he said jump, and I jumped and
23 I think he went on the lay barge --

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. -- and he jumped, too. And I jumped in the water,

1 and when I realized, I looked at the top of the barge, I seen
2 John. John was trying to untie a rope from the front of the
3 lay barge. I don't know why, you know, and I told John, I said
4 jump, John, jump, and he looked back at me and said, swim, boy,
5 swim, you know. So I started swimming and Albert, he was in
6 the water and I'd say at least 20 foot away was Rocky, and
7 Rocky wasn't swimming. He had a life vest on, and he was
8 crying and he was hollering and screaming, you know, help me.
9 I couldn't do nothing for him because I was so far away from
10 him. I was swallowing salt water. I was trying to stay above
11 water. I didn't have a life vest on. And I knew the waves
12 were coming towards the barge, and it was kind of rough, and I
13 knew if I didn't swim towards the waves, that it was bringing
14 me right back into the fire, you know, beside the barge, and
15 not a place I wanted to be. So I kept swimming and I kept
16 swimming. And I had a piece of 4 x 4 wood I found in the
17 water, and I grabbed onto it, and I was swimming with one hand,
18 and I swam about, I don't know, at least almost 40 yards I
19 would say, and I seen the Captain Mitch, the green and white
20 crew boat, and I was waving, and I was waving for like at least
21 a minute or so and I seen them, and they finally seen me. It
22 was Prince, I seen Prince point, right there and they had
23 another guy on there. I'm not familiar with him. They helped
24 me up on the crew boat and after that, you know, they had all
25 these boats came from, I guess it was surveyors and stuff that

1 were out there. By then, Billy was in a little workboat and
2 they pulled up alongside the crew boat. They had a body in
3 there. Let's see.

4 Q. Who?

5 A. I think it was Kenny. And I pretty much can't tell
6 you anything after that. We went to a well, Prince shut a well
7 and --

8 Q. Did you sustain any injuries, Brian?

9 A. I had a brush burn from getting on the boat under my
10 arm.

11 Q. Uh-huh.

12 A. I don't know how I didn't make it out of it. God was
13 with me, man.

14 Q. Can you just help me out here, Brian, with some of
15 the names of the people, and describe who was on the barge with
16 you and the people that are out there, and just where they were
17 as best you can recall?

18 A. That morning, I always help Kenny do a headcount, you
19 know, the six people on the barge.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. A supervisor, crane operator. John Mire is the crane
22 operator. Kenny Rink was the supervisor. And we had four
23 hands, myself, Albert, Terry and Tim and me is four.

24 Q. Terry and then there was Tim you say?

25 A. Yeah, his name was Cleveland, you know.

1 Q. So John, Kenny, yourself, Albert, Terry and
2 Cleveland?

3 A. Six people.

4 Q. Okay. And there was the captain?

5 A. Captain Tim was there, and Rocky.

6 Q. Captain Tim.

7 A. Yeah, I don't know his last name.

8 Q. Okay. So can you just tell us briefly before, you
9 know, before you went in for lunch, and before you were moving,
10 where each one of these people normally was that morning, what
11 you were doing and --

12 A. I lifted up the spud and then I got off the spuds.
13 Kenny had called me over and the way Kenny is, he talked so
14 fast you can barely understand anything he would say.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I had to -- every time he would tell me to do
17 something, it wasn't like a normal person talking to you to
18 your face. He would say it away from you. I couldn't
19 understand. I'd have to question him three or four times, get
20 aggravated, you know. I asked him again. He said go each
21 lunch is what he told me. So, you know, we'd naturally go in
22 the doghouse and we have a microwave, or a sandwich, whatever.
23 So it was me and I remember it was Terry. Terry and Cleveland.
24 They had some stuff to heat up, and the other guy, Albert, he
25 came in but he left out and Rocky came off the boat and he came

1 sat in the Kenny Rink's seat at the desk, and he was telling
2 us, you know, about his week he was off and all that, and I
3 really can't remember all the rest of it.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. And like I said, I called my mom and I talked to her,
6 and right when I was getting off the phone, the spud came down.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I said, Mom, I've got to go. Because when the spud
9 came down, it was a few seconds. I walked out the doghouse
10 before it happened. It wasn't just --

11 Q. Okay. How, how -- how long before you started moving
12 to this particular site, how many -- you were lifting pilings
13 out most of the morning? You were taking pilings out. So you
14 did that for say about three hours or so?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Well, actually, no. We had the second boat. I'd say
18 about an hour and a half.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Until about 11:30, 11:45, and the boat come got us.

21 Q. Okay. Now the supervisor, Kenny, you said?

22 A. Kenny Rink.

23 Q. Is he talking to the captain about -- of the tug
24 about where to position the barge?

25 A. That's the thing. After he told me to go eat lunch,

1 he never came in the doghouse, and I'm suspecting that he went
2 on the tug because he would normally go on the tug to try to,
3 you know, get Tim on the case, you know, where we have to go
4 or, you know, spud down at, and that's the last I seen Kenny
5 after he told me to go eat lunch. I don't even know where he
6 was.

7 Q. And normally -- have you ever observed that
8 conversation between the barge supervisor and the captain as to
9 how they go about determining where to position the barge?

10 A. I've never, no.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I never was on the boat, you know.

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. I stayed on the barge.

15 Q. And is Kenny in communication with someone else off
16 the barge normally during the day? Does he have a cell phone?

17 A. He has a Nextel.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, pretty often, you know, get calls, you know,
20 from the crew supervisors.

21 Q. Does he have like charts or a laptop computer or
22 something that he --

23 A. No.

24 Q. No. Would you describe your -- the operation of the
25 spud winches and what's involved with lifting the spud down?

1 A. Basically it's a friction winch --

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. -- I guess like -- kind of like a crane, you know.

4 You have a lever and --

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. -- you have a brake, and you have a gear in the back,
7 you throw it into gear.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Once you throw it into gear, it locks, I guess your
10 spools, and the first one is the front spud and the second one
11 is the back spud.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And, you know, you give it gas and you pull it back
14 and it tightens up and I'll pull your spud up, and we have
15 these marks set to when you can see them. They do a splice of
16 cable, take a piece of cable that long and they take wrenches
17 and open it up and put it in the cable. So you know that's
18 your mark. Whenever you see that mark, you stop pulling the
19 spud out or you pull it out, the spud well, it don't shift, you
20 know.

21 Q. Okay. When you lift the spud up and now you're going
22 to move the barge, what's the normal procedure for you to move
23 the barge? Once you lift a spud up, what do you normally do?

24 A. Kenny will tell me if we're in a situation where I've
25 got to lift the back one first. So you move the back end

1 around, I'll lift the back one. If I lift the front one first,
2 you know, I have eye contact with Kenny at all times, you know,
3 and that's, that's pretty much how I know. When I lift a
4 spud -- once the spuds are lifted, the tug pretty much has it
5 on its own until I'm told to drop them, and that's when I drop
6 them.

7 Q. Okay. And when you drop them, there's a control
8 there on the winch, you just sort of set them down or you
9 just -- when the deploy the spud, does it free fall down or --

10 A. It free falls.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. You keep tension on the brake so it doesn't backlash.

13 Q. Okay. And when you lift the spud up and now you're
14 using the brake, do you put pins in or not?

15 A. I mean we can. We never put pins in a spud, you
16 know, we never had to. We stayed in the field, you know.

17 Q. When you say didn't have to, what --

18 A. Usually when you're going a short destination, I mean
19 you're say a couple of hundred yards away, you really don't put
20 a pin through the spud. I mean I'm sure it's a lot safer to do
21 it, but we don't. I don't know why.

22 Q. Are there pins there to use or --

23 A. Yeah, there's pins.

24 Q. Okay. So just for short moves, just a short 10
25 minutes or something like that.

1 A. Yeah. It don't -- that field's not that big, you
2 know what I mean.

3 Q. But the pins are there and the holes are there?

4 A. The holes are there.

5 Q. Okay. And the brake itself, was it operating
6 normally the day before? Did you have any problems with the
7 brakes?

8 A. No, no problems (indiscernible).

9 Q. And the morning you -- that morning, you said you
10 checked the -- you went around and the crew checks the
11 equipment and the crane --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- and the winches. Could you just take us through
14 that again when you check your equipment as to what you're
15 looking for?

16 A. Well, the first thing I do is we try to get our
17 coolers done, you know, get something cold to drink and then
18 get our ice for the coolers and then I check the oil in the
19 spud unit. If that's good, you know, I'll go check the air
20 compressor, check the oil in that. John worries about the
21 crane. He was the crane operator. He checked all that.
22 Kenny, we've been having problems with our barge leaking water
23 in the tool shed. I don't know where the water's coming from,
24 but we had to pump it out in the mornings and evenings before
25 we leave.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. We usually have about a half a foot of water on top
3 of the floors in the hole.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. And that's pretty much all. I check the oil and the
6 diesel and everything, make sure we've got enough diesel to
7 last. If we don't, we'll fuel up. We fuel the crane every
8 morning.

9 Q. Is there one or two spud winches? One winch?

10 A. There's two spools.

11 Q. Two spools and one winch. One machine and two
12 spools.

13 A. One diesel, one Detroit.

14 Q. And that one Detroit -- that diesel is also powering
15 other equipment on the barge, or is it just for the winch?

16 A. Just for the spuds.

17 Q. Is there another generator hook up?

18 A. No, we have a portable generator.

19 Q. You have another portable generator.

20 A. We use it to heat up food and stuff in the microwave
21 or, you know, drain pipe, whatever.

22 Q. Okay. So there's the crane, there's the spud winch,
23 portable generator. Any other deck equipment you can remember?

24 A. The vibrating hammer --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- is the only thing.

2 Q. We're going to go out today and look at this
3 equipment. So you're just kind of helping me out. In the
4 doghouse, you said there's a microwave?

5 A. Microwave, a desk, two sofas. That's pretty much
6 what we have in the doghouse. We have a window in the back,
7 window on two sides, and there's a door on the front.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But the window in the back was closed. We didn't
10 open that one. And if you look out, say this is the doghouse,
11 if you look out that way, this window was closed, too.

12 Q. Okay. So if you're looking forward. Is that looking
13 aft or forward?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Forward.

15 MR. TURRELL: Forward.

16 BY MR. TURRELL:

17 Q. And this is one of the spuds here?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's the back spud.

19 BY MR. TURRELL:

20 Q. This is the one that --

21 A. Left go.

22 Q. What was the weather conditions like? You said it
23 was kind of choppy out there?

24 A. It was choppy.

25 Q. Uh-huh. Any other additional precautions when the

1 weather that was kicking up? You guys on the deck crew, did
2 you have to take any precautions when the weather kicks up a
3 little bit?

4 A. Yeah, if it gets kind of rough, you know, out there,
5 the crane operator will make a decision or, you know, he'll let
6 go if he's hooked on or something, or if there's lightening,
7 he'll boom down --

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. -- you know. I mean but we don't make that call. I
10 think it's Grasso. Grasso, they make the call if it's too
11 rough to work.

12 Q. Okay. And when you're working on deck, what kind of
13 safety equipment do you wear? Do you guys have any --

14 A. We have a hardhat, safety glasses, steel-toed boots.
15 We have earplugs when needed. We try to wear our lifejacket as
16 much as we can, you know. Like I said, we were eating lunch.

17 Q. Is it a work vest type or --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And that day, do you recall people wearing life vests
20 or work vests or do you normally take them off in the doghouse?

21 A. We were wearing them that morning.

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. When Kenny told us to go to lunch, you know, it's
24 kind of uncomfortable eating with that on, you know, and we
25 took them off. It was kind of like a split decision, you know.

1 I mean when it happens, you know, you don't know where your
2 lifejacket's at.

3 Q. Uh-huh. Okay.

4 MR. TURRELL: I'll let Brian ask some questions here.

5 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB.

6 BY MR. CURTIS:

7 Q. I have a few questions. I deal mostly with
8 engineering aspects. So in regards to when you pick up, use
9 the crane -- the winch to pick up the spuds, is there a brake
10 set? How do you secure it in place, once the spuds are up?

11 A. When it's up, you lock your brake. In the back,
12 there's like a little hook thing underneath the pedal and they
13 have a piece of flat bar and we'll hook it right to this flat
14 bar, and you throw it out of friction, you know, the friction
15 lever. You do it at kind of the same time, you know.

16 Q. Does that kind of dogs the drum in?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Fix the drum.

19 A. The brake band holds it up.

20 Q. So unless the pins are in, the only thing holding it
21 up is the cable attached to the winch?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. These spuds, were they down several days? I mean do
24 you basically anchor the vessel with these spuds, and that's
25 the way it works, and how long would they be deployed or down

1 at any given time typically? That's just for information.

2 A. It depends on how long you're going to be in that
3 location.

4 Q. So it could be several days or --

5 A. I've never been in any one -- several days in one
6 spot out in that field but, you know, it could be.

7 Q. Okay. But that's the purpose of them, to stabilize
8 the vessel. How big are these pins that you would put in?
9 Could one person pick them up or are they --

10 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's a solid piece of -- like I said
11 on there, you know, and they have the hole designed for it to
12 fit right through the spud. Once you pick the spud up, you're
13 supposed to pick it up about that far off the spud well, and
14 there's so much mud, you know, you've got to scrape it off the
15 (indiscernible) until you hit the hole and push it in. It's
16 designed to cover the whole spud well, on each side, so that if
17 it fell, you know, it would catch it.

18 Q. Okay. But was there any requirements that you use
19 them or the crew just didn't typically use them or --

20 A. We seldomly used them. I'm not going to lie. We
21 seldomly used them.

22 Q. Have you ever had any training in running the winch
23 and putting the pins in? What was your training background as
24 far as operating the winch?

25 A. When I worked at Berry Brothers off and on, I worked

1 there three times, we used them a lot because a lot of times
2 when we would move, we would got a pretty good ways, you know.
3 I was taught how to run a spud unit when I worked there. So it
4 was pretty repetitious for me.

5 Q. But as far as this operator, did you have any
6 training from them in this job?

7 A. Pretty much my first day I got on, you know, Tomas
8 wanted to see if I could run it, and I ran it and I did fine.

9 Q. Now you said you do the maintenance in the morning.
10 Is that a daily event or how often did you do that?

11 A. I check it every day. You know, I tried to do it
12 every day. I mean there's some mornings, you know, they have
13 something to get on really fast, and so I wouldn't have time to
14 check the oil in the air compressor or the spud unit.

15 Q. Any problems you identified that morning with it?

16 A. No. No, sir.

17 Q. As far as overhauls and whatnot associated with a
18 winch, are you familiar with how often they'd be looked at
19 company-wise for rebuilds or --

20 A. Depending, we would -- every day, he would tell me,
21 keep an eye on the spud cable. Tell me if you see any burrs or
22 anything like in the cable or wearing, you know, and some days
23 it would be hard. The cable would be muddy, you know, you
24 can't tell but most of the time, you know, I would pay
25 attention to that, and if I seen something, I'd let the

1 supervisor know. I can tell you, on these spuds, where the
2 shims are, in the spud well, on the spud, you could never look
3 at that. I mean you don't know if it's wearing. I notice
4 things when I worked at other places, you know. At Berry
5 Brothers, we -- it's the same way wherever you go. You
6 can't -- they don't know what it looks like inside there.
7 You'd have to pull a spud all the way out the well just to look
8 at it, the shim and --

9 Q. So you pulled the spuds up that morning and set the
10 brakes. You didn't have any problems setting it? It was
11 typical.

12 A. Same thing every day, you know. They locked good. I
13 always make sure I lock it good. Even when I lock them, I'll
14 push them down to make sure it's hooked again. Sometimes I
15 even look at it to see if it's hooked.

16 Q. I realize it's tough to recall, but how long do you
17 think you were underway before it let go roughly?

18 A. I'd say at least 8, 9, 10 minutes, something like
19 that. After we were on our way. It was enough time to heat up
20 some food, you know, in the microwave.

21 Q. You said you had a water leak somewhere in one of the
22 tool compartments?

23 A. Yeah, the tool compartment. We could never find the
24 leak. It was just coming up from around the compartment into
25 that one or it just had a hole somewhere but it was holding

1 water sometimes, you know.

2 Q. Did you pump it daily or --

3 A. Yeah, pretty much every day lately for the last two
4 weeks.

5 Q. How many gallons would come in overnight roughly?

6 A. I'd say it was about that far from the ramp -- from
7 the bottom to the boards that were on the deck, and some
8 mornings it would be like that far off the top.

9 Q. Say about --

10 A. Two, three inches maybe --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- above the floor, the decking.

13 Q. A total of 10 inches from the keel to -- or from the
14 floor to --

15 A. About 6 to 10 inches.

16 Q. Six to ten inches. Just in that compartment?

17 A. Yeah, in the whole compartment. If you go down
18 there, you know.

19 Q. Okay. A little bit of just general knowledge,
20 placing the pilings, vibrating the pilings, how does that work?
21 You had pilings sitting on this barge. Just take me quickly
22 through how you get those in, the operation --

23 A. The vibrating or driving the pilings.

24 Q. Driving the pilings.

25 A. We have leads that we pick up with the crane. We

1 call them leads. The pilings have to go in the leads, and
2 pretty much just to keep it straight. So whenever, you know, a
3 man has guide the leads to keep the piling straight, and
4 they'll get over wherever they want to drop the piling and the
5 piling will hang at least about 10, 12 foot below the leads, so
6 you can get ready to stab the piling where you want it, and
7 once you get the piling stabbed, they'll drop the leads pretty
8 much down to the level of the water and you'll look at it from
9 this angle and from another angle, to see if it's pretty level
10 and straight, you know, they have a follow block that sits on
11 top of the piling and they have a 3,000 pound hammer maybe I
12 guess. And most of the follow blocks on the piling, the guy
13 will unhook the chains from the follow block to the hammer,
14 which is so the hammer can get more space to drive the piling,
15 you know, and they just drive pilings.

16 Q. How long does it take to drive one in?

17 A. On a good day about maybe 8 minutes, 10 minutes,
18 depending on how hard the ground is, soft, the sand, you know,
19 it takes us a long time to drive it, depending how far you want
20 it down.

21 Q. How do you determine where it goes? Just somebody on
22 the vessel is telling you this one here, they have a chart or
23 something they go by?

24 A. Yeah. Well, wherever they want it. They'll tell
25 them, you know. I really don't understand what you mean by

1 that, you know.

2 Q. I was just wondering if there was somebody on board
3 generally telling you.

4 A. The supervisor will know, I guess. Us hands know as
5 least as possible.

6 Q. My next question, other equipment on the vessels,
7 like bottles, acetylene, anything to do with any of those types
8 of bottles on the vessels at the time or --

9 A. Yeah, we had a lot of empty ones. Every time we
10 would get some new ones, we would bring our empty ones in on
11 the crew boat. I really can't tell you how many empty ones we
12 had. They were closer to the doghouse. We had a rope tied so
13 they won't fall, and we had a piece of hand railing where the
14 hatch cover was for the hole, and I think they might have had
15 maybe like four, maybe five. I think we had two full bottles
16 of oxygen and one bottle -- one full bottle of acetylene.

17 Q. That's all I have, Brian. Thank you.

18 MR. CURTIS: That's all I've got.

19 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. I've got a few questions. Excuse me if I jump around
22 a little bit. When you start out, how long does it take you to
23 get from Ivanhoe Landing out to the work site usually?

24 A. Thirty minutes.

25 Q. Could you describe -- actually, tell me again who

1 picked you up out of the water, what boat that was and --

2 A. The Captain Mitch. A green and white boat, crew
3 boat.

4 Q. Back to the pins again. Where do you store the pins?
5 Are they actually like hanging there?

6 A. They're stored on the deck.

7 Q. Let me see. What sort of, what sort of training, if
8 any, do you have on what to do in case of an emergency,
9 something happens out there?

10 A. I had water survival and -- but I had never really
11 had any training like with fires or anything like that, just
12 basic water survival.

13 Q. Could you describe that a little bit, what sort of
14 things you learned in that or --

15 A. Basically it's like (indiscernible), you know,
16 leaping in the water. They would pull you over this thing and
17 if you can get out, you know, and a seatbelt and like a door.
18 I went to this rig in Morgan City for Berry Brothers the second
19 time I hired, they have a lot of trustful guys over there,
20 basically training for like rigs, confined spaces and stuff
21 like that.

22 Q. Are there any types of rules or regulations for
23 working on the barges, anything that you need to follow
24 specifically while you're out there, company-wise or --

25 A. Yeah, we always wear our PPE, personal protective

1 equipment, you know, hardhat, safety glasses, gloves,
2 everything you need.

3 Q. Okay. And we had heard, we had heard earlier that
4 you might have felt something before the spud barge -- the spud
5 dropped?

6 A. Well, like it stopped, like the tugboat stopped. You
7 can feel, when you're on the tow, if you come to a stop, I mean
8 I can.

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. It just come to a stop and, you know, I didn't pay no
11 attention to it because I just thought it was normal, routine,
12 stuck on a mud flat, that's been known to happen out there, you
13 know, the water's shallow. So I just kept on eating, you know,
14 and that's when the spud came down.

15 Q. How fast would you guys -- how fast would you say you
16 were going?

17 A. It was slow, a couple of knots, if that.

18 Q. Okay. It wasn't like you were jarred to a stop or
19 anything. It was just kind of a --

20 A. Well, it might have been a little better than a
21 couple of knots but I'm not a navigator. I don't know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I mean I was in the doghouse.

24 Q. Okay. And could we just go back one more time to,
25 I'm trying to kind of -- we're moving pretty quickly. I want

1 to make sure I understand where everybody was. You said you
2 jumped into the water and you looked up and you saw, I think,
3 John was on there trying -- could you go back and tell us where
4 everybody was and where you saw them again?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would it help to draw it out
6 for you?

7 MR. DUMESNIL: And this is the back. This one here.
8 This one right here. This is the doghouse. This is where we
9 were eating at, right here. And I -- when the spud fell --

10 MR. TURRELL: I'm just going to number this exhibit
11 here. This is going to be Number 1, and your first name,
12 Brian, this is the photograph you're describing that you're
13 describing.

14 (Whereupon, the document referred
15 to as Brian Exhibit No. 1 was
16 marked for identification.)

17 MR. TURRELL: Go ahead.

18 MR. DUMESNIL: I was in here, and I just got off the
19 phone with my Mom. Well, I was still on the phone, and the
20 spud had fell, and I said, Mom, I've got to go, and I came out,
21 and I was standing right here in this little open area, it's
22 probably like the middle of the barge. I kept looking at the
23 cable. It was all messed up, a bird nest, and right here where
24 the tugboat is, there's this big burst between the back of the
25 doghouse, in between the spud. I mean the fire, everything,

1 just came up and the tugboat was back here, but if I'm correct,
2 the tugboat was tied up to the lay barge. It wasn't our barge.
3 And that's where it happened was right here.

4 BY MR. LARUE:

5 Q. The gas was coming this direction?

6 A. Yeah, it was coming from up the side of the barge
7 right here, and over.

8 Q. Okay. So this is facing forward, this doorway?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. And so you were right here, and then could you
11 tell me where everyone else was in --

12 A. I was still in here. When I came out of the
13 doghouse, Terry and Tim, I think Rocky had came out, I'm not
14 sure. He had to have came out because if he was still in
15 there -- I was about right here --

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. -- when it blew, and I ducked and I looked back at
18 the tugboat and it was in flames, it was engulfed, everything
19 back by the doghouse and so I ran.

20 Q. Okay. And who was running with you?

21 A. It was John, John Mire, and I think -- I'm pretty
22 sure Albert was behind him, but Terry and Tim, I don't know if
23 they were still in here or what. I don't know.

24 Q. And then you got to the front of the barge.

25 A. Front of the barge, the crane, under the crane, right

1 here on this corner, and the lay barge was still hooked up on
2 the side. It was going -- these were the leads where the
3 pilings go in.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. And I was right here.

6 Q. You were on the far starboard end of the construction
7 barge. So you ran forward.

8 A. Forward.

9 Q. And to port or the starboard?

10 A. The right. Port is right.

11 Q. So you were over --

12 A. Yeah, right here. If you look at the crane from the
13 doghouse, I was on the right.

14 Q. So from here, the doghouse, looking forward, you ran
15 forward and to your right?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. Can you just go through the rest of it and
18 kind of describe where you saw people after that?

19 A. When we got to the back of the crane right here, John
20 was to my left. John was closer to the crane, and I asked
21 John, what do you want me to do, and he was, he was in shock
22 and he was, oh, man. I guess he had never seen nothing like it
23 in his life either. I don't know. He told me, I don't know, I
24 don't know. And Albert said jump and the boat jumped, because
25 something in the back went off, the flames were getting hotter.

1 Q. Where was Albert when he told you to jump?

2 A. He was somewhere -- I think he got on the lay barge
3 with the pilings. It was still hooked up to the side, tied up,
4 and I didn't see no more of him after that, and I jumped in the
5 water. I looked back at John. He was still walking right
6 here. He was walking around. You could tell he was nervous.
7 He didn't know what to do, and then all of a sudden he went and
8 tried to untie the ropes off of it.

9 Q. Were the flames coming that far forward yet?

10 A. No. The flames were still in front of the crane, and
11 I don't think they had got to the diesel tank yet.

12 Q. Okay. And then you mentioned that you saw people in
13 the water after you had already been in the water.

14 A. Yeah. Rocky, the deckhand, he was -- he must have
15 jumped over the pilings, on that side, went to the lay barge
16 and went off that side. When I was in the water, the barges
17 had opened up.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. And I didn't see John anymore. The fire was too bad.
20 I didn't see anybody right there.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And I seen Rocky was in the water, and like I said,
23 he had a life vest on. He was crying. He was screaming. I
24 think he was hurt. I couldn't get to him because if I would
25 have swam to him, we would have both went into the flame, you

1 know. I didn't want to be that close to that, and Albert, he
2 was in the water but I couldn't get to him. He was swimming
3 towards a tire on the lay barge, a tire. I think he made it to
4 that tire, and by that time, I just knew I had to get out of
5 there and swim as far as I can away and I did.

6 Q. If you can look at this diagram, you were -- you came
7 out here when you heard the spud drop? And at this point here,
8 just put numbers down of where everybody was. It might be
9 helpful to you. Say number 1 is you.

10 A. One is me. John was around this side of me, right
11 here. This is like the middle.

12 Q. John is number 2.

13 A. John's number 2. Tim and Terry, they had to have
14 still been in here.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I'll put them as 3 because they were behind me.

17 Q. Terry is 3 and Cleveland is 4.

18 A. Rocky was at the doorway.

19 Q. That's 5.

20 A. Right here.

21 Q. Okay. He's the deckhand off the tug. Is that
22 correct?

23 A. Yes. And Kenny, I don't know where Kenny was.

24 Q. Kenny's number 6, we don't know.

25 A. I don't know.

1 Q. And we have one more. So Kenny was number 6. We
2 don't know. The captain was number 7. Where's Albert?

3 A. Albert, he -- I don't know if he was still in the
4 doghouse or -- but I know when I got to the end of the barge,
5 he was behind me.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I don't know --

8 Q. That was number 8. The captain's number 7. All
9 right. Great. Thank you very much for doing that. I know
10 that's difficult. I really appreciate it.

11 MR. LARUE: I think that's all the questions I have
12 right now.

13 BY MR. TURRELL:

14 Q. You said at Berry Brothers, you learned how to use
15 the winch, sort of on-the-job training.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. So I assume that these barges are unmanned at night?
18 Is that correct, to your knowledge, the barges are left
19 unmanned?

20 A. At Athena or Berry Brothers?

21 Q. Your, your -- no, I'm sorry. Athena, the current
22 barge.

23 A. Yeah, they not manned.

24 Q. They're unmanned.

25 A. We don't have a night crew.

1 Q. And before you leave, what's the procedure before you
2 leave the barge at night? Do you have kind of a shutdown
3 procedure?

4 A. Yeah, we dog the crane off. We have a
5 (indiscernible) at the end of the barge with a D ring, and then
6 we hook the hooks in and tie the boom off, and tighten up, and
7 leave the brake tight, in case it gets rough, you know.

8 Q. And the spuds are down?

9 A. Yeah, the spuds are down.

10 Q. Do you know the approximate weight of each spud?

11 A. It's hard for me to say.

12 Q. If you don't know, just say you don't know.

13 MR. SCHLOTTERER: Tell them if you know. Tell them
14 if you don't know, you don't know.

15 BY MR. TURRELL:

16 Q. We'll be able to get that information. How long does
17 it take for you to lift the spud up? A minute, less than a
18 minute.

19 A. I'd say about 10 seconds, you know, if you've got it
20 full throttle, wide open, you know. Some of them lift them
21 both at the same time. The engine we have, you can't. It's
22 just too much weight, you know.

23 Q. Okay.

24 BY MR. LARUE:

25 Q. Just one more. Liam Larue, NTSB again. When you got

1 picked up by the crew boat, where did you go next? Can you
2 just describe that a little bit?

3 A. When I got picked up by the crew boat, I had a hard
4 time getting in the crew boat, because there's about 200 of me
5 plus, and it was high, and they kept telling me not to get
6 close to the back where the (indiscernible) were. So they
7 finally got me on the crew boat and at that time, they really
8 wasn't worried about me too much anymore because they had other
9 people they were trying to get, and it was Prince, he was
10 driving the boat. He's a pumper for Grasso. By that time,
11 they had boats came in from all over, you know. They had
12 another tug that came by. They had a few airboats. Billy was
13 in workboat. Billy was circling around the barge looking for
14 people in the water, and after that, we took off. They took
15 off I guess to go shut the well down I guess or whatever it
16 was. We stayed there for a little while, I'd say for about 10
17 minutes. I sat in the seat in the crew boat. After that, they
18 went to a (indiscernible) rig and I got on another little small
19 crew boat that brought me into the landing.

20 Q. So you stayed on scene there near the fire for 10
21 minutes?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And then they took you to another boat?

24 A. Then we went to a well and shut the well down I
25 guess.

1 Q. Okay. Thank you.

2 MR. TURRELL: We'll go to the Coat Guard next. John.

3 LT. LUFF: John Luff, Coast Guard.

4 BY LT. LUFF:

5 Q. When you control the spuds for going down, do you
6 just release them real fast or do you use the brake to kind of
7 slow it as it sinks, so it comes down not as fast, so it won't
8 rats nest on the wheel?

9 A. I usually drop it soft, unless otherwise. Unless
10 Kenny says free fall it.

11 Q. Can you free fall it without rat nesting the reels?

12 A. I can.

13 Q. Okay. And the pins usually were on -- lying on the
14 deck right there or were they hanging on a hook right by the --

15 A. Pretty much they were lying on the side. They have a
16 grating that's made to cover the cables --

17 Q. Uh-huh.

18 A. -- from the shims, and it was laying on the deck
19 beside the grating.

20 Q. Okay. And then the cables for the winch, do they go
21 up and then attach to the top of the spuds or how does that
22 cable get attached to there?

23 A. Well, the spud, the spud -- okay. See where it is.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. It's like the cable goes down in -- the spud's all

1 the way down to the shims, pretty much almost to the end of the
2 spud at the bottom.

3 Q. Okay. So the cable connects to the bottom of the
4 spud, and that's how it lifts up and goes back down. So the
5 wire rope goes in the water and out of the water with the brake
6 and the spud.

7 A. The cable does, yes, sir.

8 Q. Okay. And you usually only control one of those at a
9 time?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And down in the storage hole that's right next
12 to there, that's where you kept other tools and grease and
13 everything. Is that door usually left open or closed?

14 A. That's pretty much what we do first thing every
15 morning is we open the hole.

16 Q. And keep it open throughout the day. And there's
17 like little handrails around it from keeping people from
18 falling in?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay.

21 LT. LUFF: I don't have anything further.

22 MR. TURRELL: Dana?

23 MR. LEE: Dana Lee, Athena Construction. One thing
24 I'd like to comment on this spud, the cable, is it runs along
25 the deck as it leaves the unit, it's got a deck shim here that

1 goes down. We have a shim in the -- depending on the spud,
2 probably 4 1/2 foot from the bottom, where when the spud is up,
3 it's pinned. It's clear to the bottom of the deck, and then it
4 comes back up, and dead man's to the backside. So it's like a
5 two par line instead of a single line which gives you better
6 control of the spud as far as your speed of raising and
7 lowering the unit.

8 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Any questions for Brian?

9 MR. LEE: I just hope he makes it through it all
10 right.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Mr. Osborn?

12 MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

13 BY MR. OSBORN:

14 Q. I only have on question. You said that you can feel
15 the barge, you know, when they stop the boat, you can feel the
16 motion and stuff. When you came out of the doghouse, was the
17 spud --

18 A. I didn't come out of the doghouse until the spud was
19 dropped.

20 Q. Okay. So you were in the doghouse. You felt the
21 barge had a stop or slowdown, you came out and then you
22 noticed -- that's when you saw the spud had fallen?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. So you saw it had just fallen and there was nobody
25 sitting on the --

1 A. Yeah, there was nobody there.

2 Q. Okay.

3 LT. LUFF: John Luff, Coast Guard. I actually do
4 have one more follow up question.

5 BY LT. LUFF:

6 Q. In the photos right here, there's a close up look of
7 the winches, of the actual winch to verify the position of the
8 handles. In this picture right here, looking at the handles,
9 you said the one that's farthest inboard controls the one
10 that's forward and the one that's closer to you, from the point
11 of view of the front, controls the one that's towards the
12 crane. Is that correct?

13 A. This is the front spud. This is the back spud. This
14 is the front pedal for your front, and this is the back pedal
15 for your back spud.

16 Q. Okay. And in that photo, it looks like the pedal for
17 the back spud brake is one that sprung lose while the other one
18 is set if you look at the metal lip that connects to the bar at
19 the bottom that you described. Is that accurate?

20 A. You can tell by this one because it was locked, the
21 back end was down with the hook.

22 Q. Okay. So according to that photo, it does look like
23 the aft spud was released but the forward one was still locked.

24 A. Yeah, it does.

25 Q. When we actually got on the scene and saw that both

1 spuds were down. If fire damage of anything happened to that
2 motor or winch, is there a part in there that would give way so
3 that the other spud could fall? Like even without the brake
4 getting released, like some other part could fail right there,
5 so that the spud could fall?

6 A. The only thing I could see is the cable would pop
7 but, you know --

8 MR. LEE: This is Dana Lee, Athena Construction
9 again. The heat will expand your friction bands, which would
10 allow it because one of the crew as they came over said he saw
11 the front spud slowly lowering itself, and there was nobody
12 around it. Everything was on fire. So it had to be the heat
13 expansion of the brake band and everything, that was bringing
14 down the front spud.

15 BY LT. LUFF:

16 Q. Here's another photo of the actual reels where the
17 wires are. The one that's at the top, the one that has the
18 least amount of wire on it, is that the one for the aft spud?

19 A. That's your back spud.

20 Q. Uh-huh. And then the other one -- and usually when
21 they're fully up, there's wire going along the entire length of
22 that reel rather than just halfway as it is in that photo right
23 there?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. TURRELL: So this would be the front. Is that
2 correct?

3 LT. LUFF: Front, and by front, we mean the one
4 closest to the crane and aft closest to the doghouse.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

6 LT. LUFF: I'm done.

7 MR. TURRELL: Mr. Patterson?

8 MR. PATTERSON: I don't have any questions at this
9 time.

10 MR. MARCOTTE: Tom Marcotte with Chevron, I don't
11 have any questions.

12 MR. STANSBURY: Drake Stansbury, Athena, I have no
13 questions.

14 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Liam?

15 MR. LARUE: I think I'm good. Thank you.

16 MR. TURRELL: Anybody? Brian.

17 MR. CURTIS: No.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I ask one more thing?

19 MR. TURRELL: Sure.

20 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

21 Q. I just want to reconfirm again, the barge acted like
22 it hit something prior to the spud coming down?

23 A. You know, I'm not going to say it hit anything.

24 Q. It jerked, like it slowed down or something, like
25 you --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- hit a flat or something.

3 A. I didn't pay it no mind.

4 Q. Yeah. But that happened prior to --

5 A. Prior before the spud fell.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. TURRELL: Brian.

8 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, just one more.

9 BY MR. CURTIS:

10 Q. Brian, have you ever seen a spud drop from a broken
11 cable or brake failure before?

12 A. At Berry Brothers I have.

13 Q. Can you just describe what happened?

14 A. It'll fall and the cable, it popped from where the
15 spud was, the spud, in the spud well.

16 Q. That was a cable failure.

17 A. A cable failure.

18 Q. Have you ever seen a brake fail on one of these spud
19 winches?

20 A. No.

21 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have. Thank you.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. I don't think we've established. How much time was
24 there -- Liam Larue, NTSB. How much time was there between you
25 felt the bump and then the spud dropped?

1 A. A few seconds, maybe five.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you.

3 LT. LUFF: John Luff, Coast Guard.

4 BY LT. LUFF:

5 Q. You checked the brake pads and the tension and
6 everything that morning on the winch for the spuds?

7 A. Well, I check it, you know, it feels the same, you
8 know, you lock it and unlock it.

9 Q. And you felt the tension felt fine like it didn't
10 need to be adjusted?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 BY MR. TURRELL:

14 Q. Okay. Brian, this is the first interview. We really
15 appreciate your time. Will you just acknowledge that this is
16 recorded and this is a public statement?

17 A. Yes, I acknowledge it.

18 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Thanks very much. This
19 concludes the interview now, and I'll stop the recording.

20 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
21 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Brian Paul Dumesnil

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 14, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: GARY GAUDET

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Tuesday,
 October 17, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 11:25 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL PATTERSON
Central Boat Rentals
Morgan City, Louisiana

DAVID ADAMS
Central Boat Rentals

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

HARRY SCHWARTZ
Gulfport Energy

JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

TERRY MIRE
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

RUFUS HARRIS
Harris and Rufty

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:25 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Good morning. It's 11:25, October 17th. We're at Morgan City, Louisiana, Coast Guard Station, interviewing Mr. Gary Gaudet of Central Boat Rentals. To my left?

MR. PATTERSON: Michael Patterson, with Central Boat Rentals.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron.

MR. MIRE: Terry Mire (ph.) with Chevron.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, Athena Construction.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

MR. GAUDET: Gary Gaudet, Central Boat Rentals.

MR. HARRIS: Rufus Harris, Harris and Rufty.

MR. ADAMS: David Adams, Central Boat Rentals.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. We're interviewing Mr. Gary Gaudet of Central Boat Rentals.

INTERVIEW OF GARY GAUDET

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Gary, spell your name for us please?

1 A. G A U D E T.

2 Q. Okay. And how old are you?

3 A. Fifty.

4 Q. And what is your city and state of residence?

5 A. Berwick, Louisiana.

6 Q. Okay. And what is your current employment?

7 A. I work for Central Boat Rentals as Operations
8 Manager.

9 Q. How long have you been that?

10 A. Nineteen years.

11 Q. Can you give us a brief professional history before
12 that?

13 A. Prior to Central Boat Rentals, I worked for a company
14 called Dumar Marina (ph.). I was in sales and prior to that, I
15 worked for, I worked for my father for many years, in
16 operations also.

17 Q. Okay. And what is your -- as Central Boat Rentals'
18 Operations Manager, what does that entail?

19 A. I usually get the telephone call from the customer
20 who -- then I dispatch the boat, receive instruction from the
21 customer, when, were the boat goes or the barge.

22 Q. Who was the customer for Miss Megan? Who was the
23 customer in this particular case?

24 A. It was Gulfport Energy.

25 Q. And can you tell us a little bit about the fleet that

1 you manage?

2 A. We have 32 boats, 33 boats, different style boats.

3 Most of our boats service in the oil field industry.

4 Q. How many employees?

5 A. On boats, I'm not quite sure.

6 Q. About 50, 100.

7 A. Over 100.

8 Q. Okay. And can you just tell us a little bit about
9 what occurred on Thursday, October 12th, your perspective.

10 A. Okay. Thursday afternoon, I was in Colfax,
11 Louisiana.

12 Q. Uh-huh.

13 A. I was not aware of anything until approximately 5:00
14 p.m. when I called the office because my cell phone was dead.

15 Q. Okay. And at 5:00, what did you learn?

16 A. I learned that the Miss Megan was burning, and that
17 Timmy had passed away.

18 Q. And who told you this?

19 A. Rolla (ph.), our dispatcher.

20 Q. And what then? What did you do or --

21 A. Well, I sat down and -- there was nothing I could do
22 at that point, you know.

23 Q. Okay. What can you tell us about Captain Tossin?

24 A. He was an excellent captain.

25 Q. How long had you known him?

1 A. I knew him when he was working for Gaudet Boat
2 Rentals also, which was prior to 1996.

3 Q. Can you characterize his boat handling skills?

4 A. He was good, very good.

5 Q. Can you tell us about any type of equipment that he
6 would have had on board his boat, navigation, communication, to
7 the best of your knowledge?

8 A. Radar, 2 VHF radios, GPS and we have Nextel
9 telephones.

10 Q. Okay. He had a personal or company.

11 A. He has a company and a personal.

12 Q. The GPS, do you recall what type of GPS display he
13 would have?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. So on the boat, who does the captain report to when
16 he's working?

17 A. Normally he reports to the field office over there,
18 but if there's any kind of problems, he would, you know,
19 mechanical problems, he would report to us.

20 Q. Do you know of any mechanical problems on the Miss
21 Megan?

22 A. Not at that point, no, sir.

23 Q. Do you recall the last time it was serviced or any --

24 A. About one week before, he had an engine overhaul.

25 Q. Can you give us the details as to why that was done?

1 A. He complained the engine was sluggish, black smoking.
2 So we sent the mechanics in the field, they checked it, and
3 they decided it needed an overhaul. So we brought to our dock
4 in Morgan City.

5 Q. Okay. And that was completed and since that time,
6 were there any problems?

7 A. No, sir.

8 Q. Do you recall which engine it was, port or starboard?

9 A. No, I don't. We have a record of that.

10 Q. And what can you tell us about Mr. Lewis?

11 A. I didn't know Rodney. If I saw him, I probably would
12 recognize him but I didn't know him personally.

13 MR. TURRELL: Liam?

14 BY MR. LARUE:

15 Q. Are you aware of any procedures that were in place on
16 board the vessel, regulations, anything?

17 A. As far as I know, all our (indiscernible) were in
18 place.

19 MR. LARUE: I don't have any questions.

20 MR. TURRELL: John Luff?

21 LT. LUFF: No questions.

22 MR. TURRELL: Brian Osborn?

23 MR. OSBORN: I have no questions.

24 MR. TURRELL: Michael?

25 MR. PATTERSON: No questions.

1 MR. MARCOTTE: No questions from Chevron.

2 MR. LEE: No questions from Athena.

3 MR. SCHWARTZ: None from Harry Schwartz.

4 MR. ADAMS: No questions.

5 MR. TURRELL: Thank you.

6 BY MR. TURRELL:

7 Q. Mr. Gaudet, if you would just acknowledge that this
8 is being recorded?

9 A. I acknowledge this has been recorded.

10 Q. Thank you.

11 MR. TURRELL: The interview is ended.

12 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
13 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
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Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

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Interview of: WILLIAM KENNERSON

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

October 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 3:05 p.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

HARRY SCHWARTZ
Gulfport Energy

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

BRAD SCHLOTTERER
Kean, Miller, Hawthorne, D'Armond,
McCowan and Jarman
Counsel for William Kennerson

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:05 p.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Good afternoon. It's 3:05. We're in Morgan City Coast Guard Station. My name is Morgan Turrell of the National Transportation Safety Board. We're interviewing William Kennerson, and before we get started, we'll introduce the people at the table. Again, Morgan Turrell, and to my left?

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, with Gulfport Energy. That's B R I A N, O S B O R N.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, with Athena Construction, D A N A, L E E.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, U.S. Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, Engineering Investigator, NTSB.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, Chevron.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. TURRELL: And representing Mr. Kennerson.

MR. SCHLOTTERER: Brad Schlotterer representing Bill.

INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM KENNERSON

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Okay. And, Bill, if you would just go ahead and

1 spell your first name and last name and then give us the city
2 and state of residence?

3 A. W I L L I A M, J. Kennerson, K E N N E R S O N,
4 Hyacine (ph.), Louisiana.

5 Q. Yes, sir. And can you tell me how old you are?

6 A. Forty-eight.

7 Q. Okay. And, sir, what's your occupation?

8 A. I'm a supervisor on a pile driving boat.

9 Q. A supervisor on a pile driving boat. Okay. And who
10 is your employer?

11 A. Athena LLC.

12 Q. Okay. And how long have you been working in that
13 capacity?

14 A. I've been with the company for 27 years.

15 Q. And what did you do before that?

16 A. I was a shipper, offshore shipper.

17 Q. Okay. Been around boats all your life I take it?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. And do you have a Coast Guard license by chance?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. And on October 12th, Thursday, were you employed for
22 Athena?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. And can you tell us the circumstances starting
25 with the morning of October 12th, what you observed and what

1 you experienced on October 12th, that Thursday?

2 A. We was at battery 2. We finished up there. We got
3 hooked up with, the Megan come to us, brought us over to some
4 pilings on the (indiscernible). We picked up some pilings to
5 drive a platform with. We left from battery 2 and towed around
6 to battery 3, got the barge all set up, approximately right at
7 dinner time. The Miss Megan left us, to go hook up to the 106,
8 another barge, the pile driving barge, and he was at battery 3
9 but on the other side, towards the left side. I never saw the
10 boat after it left us. At the time, we was getting ready for
11 lunch and setting up to start driving our pilings. We was in
12 the doghouse, eating a sandwich. One of the hands come in and
13 said they had a big fire. So we all run out on the deck and we
14 looked out across the bay and we could see the fire. We wasn't
15 for sure what the fire was yet. I seen -- I could see in front
16 (indiscernible) was the 106, and part of the barge going back
17 and then I seen the flames. When I first saw it, I actually
18 thought the flame -- the barge was in back of the flame. I
19 thought maybe they was towing around the flame. I wasn't for
20 sure what was burning. And then we started getting ready to
21 put the boat over when Rick called up and told us, you know, to
22 get the boat over there. They had a man in the water. They
23 had people in the water. So we put the little boat over, a
24 little flat boat. It was rough. That's why we had it on the
25 barge. We took out to get to the barge that morning, and it

1 got rough over there. So we picked it up so the boat wouldn't
2 get all beat up. We put the boat in the water and I told two
3 or three hands to get in, so we would have room if we need it,
4 and we took off. Headed back around 3, got over there, and
5 when we got over there, we could see the boat was in flames,
6 the doghouse was in flames, the spud unit. Went around, saw
7 the Captain Mitch. I went up to the Captain Mitch, Brian was
8 hanging on the tire on the boat right there, Brian Dumesnil.

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. And then we heard a man hollering. We turned around
11 and tried to tried to get into the barges. The flame was so
12 hot we couldn't get in. We were so far away. And we just kept
13 hollering for him to come out and he wouldn't leave. He was
14 like hanging onto the tire on the piling barge. They had two
15 barges together I guess, and when we got there, this barge was
16 like this (indiscernible) and he was right here on this corner,
17 fire going over the top of him. We couldn't get into him. We
18 tried towing the crane. We took the rope off because we didn't
19 think we could throw it far enough with the rope. We was
20 hoping maybe he'd grab it. We followed the barge. We couldn't
21 pick him up. We were hollering for him to follow it, and he
22 never did come out. So we took off and went around the other
23 side hoping maybe he'd come out the other side.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. And we found -- then we found Kenny Rink. He was

1 face down in the water. All we could see was his head. We
2 didn't know who he was at the time. We just pulled him in.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. And then we seen Rocky and hurry up run over there.
5 He was struggling in the water. We drug him in the boat. Went
6 back to check, and I think it was John, we never did see him.
7 So we went over there and we just -- we went back around and
8 checked anything we saw, and then we just took off for the
9 landing with the two we had.

10 Q. Okay. Which barge were you on?

11 A. The 108.

12 Q. The 108. And your job as supervisor, do you actually
13 operate the spud winches?

14 A. That's not my job but I do it. I mean I've been
15 doing it for years.

16 Q. Okay. Brian will ask you a couple of questions on
17 that. You said when you came up, I guess the pile barge, with
18 all the pilings on, was separated from the --

19 A. The rope was loose. The barge was on fire. I don't
20 know if they turned it loose, the front end or what. They
21 couldn't get to the back or what. It was L shaped.

22 Q. You said it was actually perpendicular.

23 A. One like this and one like this.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. This was the spud barge.

1 Q. And can you tell us roughly to your best
2 recollection, how long, just by the time you saw the boat had a
3 fire on it to how long it took you to get there? Do you recall
4 how long that took?

5 A. Oh, it didn't take no more than I'd say 10 minutes.

6 Q. And how long were you -- you picked up three people.
7 How long did it take for you --

8 A. Two people.

9 Q. Two people.

10 A. Brian got on the crew boat because he was hanging on
11 the tire.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. It's hard to say. I keeping sitting there trying to
14 see Pop come out, and I'm pretty sure that was John. We called
15 him Pop.

16 Q. And to the best of your knowledge, the barges, when
17 you got close enough, where was the heaviest fire concentrated?

18 A. On the boat and the back of the barge. The tugboat
19 was the biggest fire, a big ball.

20 Q. And did you hear any explosions at all?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Did you hear the explosion initially when you were --

23 A. No, sir, we were heard nothing.

24 Q. Okay. So the first thing you saw was just the boat
25 was on fire.

1 A. A big fire. We didn't know if it was a boat until we
2 got closer. You could just see the outline of the window. The
3 whole boat was just -- I couldn't see, I couldn't see nothing
4 of that, and I could see the doghouse and there was nothing but
5 fire. That whole back corner was nothing but fire.

6 MR. TURRELL: Brian.

7 BY MR. CURTIS:

8 Q. Billy, Brian Curtis, NTSB, just a few questions. You
9 mentioned it took 10 minutes to get over there. What's that?
10 A few hundred yards? To your recollection, how far would that
11 be?

12 A. It was a pretty good distance. It was just a little
13 outboard. I don't know. It might have been a half a mile or
14 so I guess.

15 Q. Okay. You mentioned you heard further explosions.
16 Does the mean you were close by?

17 A. Well, I'd just say it was bottles going off. They
18 was going up in the air. I guess it was oxygen and acetylene
19 bottles.

20 Q. You could see them explode?

21 A. Yeah, they would come up in the air.

22 Q. Did, did you notice when you approached the barge,
23 the spuds, were they up or down? Did you notice?

24 A. The front spud I see was up and while we was messing
25 around there, it just dropped. It just fell while we were

1 trying to get to get to Mr. John.

2 Q. It just dropped quickly or --

3 A. It just fell. I don't know if the cable burned off
4 or whatever. I don't know.

5 Q. And the aft one was already --

6 A. It was already down.

7 Q. Just a little bit typically about the operation as
8 far as operating a winch. As far as using the brake, how would
9 you set the -- if you were to move the barge, how would you go
10 about picking up the spuds and fastening them on and moving
11 along?

12 A. The spuds has got a lock on them. They have a pad,
13 they have a notch cut, and they go up, they lock them in with
14 that there, and that holds the brake down.

15 Q. Okay. When --

16 A. When you pick it up, they just (indiscernible) hooks
17 underneath the beam.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. When you go to take them down, you push on the front
20 and it unlocks it so you can lower them down.

21 Q. The levers in front of you that control --

22 A. That picks them up.

23 Q. That picks them up. So they don't act as a brake in
24 any way?

25 A. No, sir. You can use it as a (indiscernible) gears.

1 Q. But the primary brake is the pedal that's being
2 rotated.

3 A. On the bottom.

4 Q. That, in effect, is the only thing holding those
5 spuds in the up position?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Have you ever seen one fail or fall for any reason
8 from that position when --

9 A. No, sir. Not, not without someone hitting it or
10 something. I've seen them hit it already, it'll go down.

11 Q. What did they hit?

12 A. Well, if they was sitting and holding it or
13 something, and they jumped off and hit it, and knocked it
14 loose.

15 Q. If that comes loose, is that just --

16 A. The spud's coming down.

17 Q. Is it quick release?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. And what happens to the spool? Does it ball up or --

20 A. It'll just spin and the cable just spins off the
21 (indiscernible).

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Once it hits bottom, it (indiscernible).

24 Q. Have you ever seen a cable part that's holding the
25 spud up? Have you ever seen a cable break and let go?

1 A. Not riding. I've seen them break. I've broke them
2 before picking them up, but dropping them down, they don't
3 break. I've never seen them break just dropping them.

4 Q. If you pick them up, you can put a pin through the --

5 A. In the spud.

6 Q. Are those pins ever used or --

7 A. We usually use them when we're in route. Like if we
8 pick up a spud barge in the yard, and they going from there
9 over to the field, they generally pin them off. You don't want
10 nobody messing with them or nothing because we ain't on there.

11 Q. In day-to-day operations in the field, would you ever
12 use the pins?

13 A. Only in places where we know there's a bad spot, we
14 pin them off, like tying a barge off, because (indiscernible)
15 something while we're working.

16 Q. So in day-to-day operations, you use the foot brake?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. That's all I have right now. Thank you, Billy.

19 MR. TURRELL: Liam.

20 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

21 BY MR. LARUE:

22 Q. Just a couple of quick questions for you. Do you
23 remember exactly who got in the boat with you when you went
24 over and saw this?

25 A. John Henry got in with me, Kelly Dupree (ph.), and

1 Nick Aucoin.

2 Q. Who was the last one?

3 A. Nick Aucoin.

4 Q. Spell the last name?

5 A. A U C O I N.

6 Q. How close would you say, just an estimate, were you
7 able to get to the barges before it was too hot to get in
8 closer?

9 A. I'd say about 100 feet.

10 Q. About a barge length?

11 A. Yeah, where the front of the barge is, it was hot.
12 We just (indiscernible) to try to get to it.

13 Q. Okay. Do you -- working for the company, do you have
14 any training at all in what to do if there's a fire or --

15 A. Not a fire like that. I've never seen nothing like
16 that.

17 Q. All right. Okay. Now how about when you're moving
18 the barges around. Have you ever hit a line like that before
19 when you're dropping a spud?

20 A. We've rubbed some lines before. You just ease them
21 down and if you see them move, you pick it back up, not the
22 high pressure ones. It's just like the line will stop.

23 Q. So could you describe what that's like if you're
24 dropping it down and you hit something?

25 A. You drop it down easy. You just pick it back up if

1 it looks like that.

2 Q. Uh-huh. All right. That's all I've got. Thank you.

3 BY MR. TURRELL:

4 Q. Just one follow up. Billy, on the people you picked
5 up out of the water, were they wearing work vests or
6 lifejackets?

7 A. Rocky had one on, yes, sir.

8 Q. The other person --

9 A. Did not have one.

10 MR. TURRELL: John Luff from the Coast Guard.

11 LT. LUFF: Yes.

12 BY LT. LUFF:

13 Q. You said the mishap was around what time?

14 A. Around 12:00.

15 Q. Okay. And when you left with the two guys you pulled
16 out of the water, you returned to the 108 barge or the shore?

17 A. We went to Ivanhoe dock, shore.

18 Q. Okay. And what type of a training do people usually
19 go through who work on these barges? I mean do you -- I mean
20 is there basic safety training or are you trained on any
21 specific jobs or how does it go when you work on barges?

22 A. Safety courses and we do fire safety and stuff like
23 that. The only thing they have on them is the fire
24 extinguishers.

25 Q. Do you get training on using any specific equipment

1 like the power packs or the generators or the cranes or, or any
2 of the other equipment that you use on the barge?

3 A. No.

4 Q. And --

5 A. We train our own people just --

6 Q. And --

7 A. We train our own people.

8 Q. And the people who work on the barges driving these
9 pilings, what typical jobs or positions do they usually do on
10 these barges?

11 A. Well, you have the operator for the crane. You have
12 a spud man. (Indiscernible) pilings. Another one hooks it up.
13 It's just -- each one has got their own job to do.

14 Q. Okay. You've got the crane operator, the spud man.

15 A. They hook the pilings up and they cut the heads so
16 they fit and --

17 Q. That's what you use the chainsaws for?

18 A. Yes, sir. They cut them, they head them up and they
19 have to drive them (indiscernible).

20 Q. Okay.

21 LT. LUFF: That's all I have.

22 BY MR. TURRELL:

23 Q. Who directs -- when you're on the barge and you're
24 the supervisor, who tells you where to drive the piles and
25 how's that -- how does that work in relationship

1 (indiscernible) driving piles?

2 A. I pretty much say. They just tell me where they want
3 them to do it at, and that's my job.

4 Q. So I mean how do you know exactly where to drive the
5 piles?

6 A. I (indiscernible) platform's at and the walkway's
7 here and they want me to drive a generator platform right in
8 the corner. So I set up to drive --

9 Q. So they give you a diagram basically or how does that
10 work?

11 A. A lot of times, yeah, we get a diagram. It's pretty
12 much -- after you've done it so long, you pretty much -- know
13 pretty much what you've got to drive.

14 Q. But there's no pre-existing pilings in the area. If
15 you're coming up to --

16 A. And then you'd probably have the whole layout, a
17 print and all, showing you the pilings, (indiscernible) and all
18 that.

19 Q. And where you were that day, the work you were doing,
20 pulling piling and driving piles, they were already piles
21 there, and you were just --

22 A. Oh, I was just building walkways and all in there.
23 They just wanted something to put the generator on.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have a question.

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. When you're given jobs to drive pilings and whatnot,
2 do they usually give you a chart showing where existing
3 pipelines may be, just so you know how close you might be to
4 something underwater?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Would you know if the tug captain would have anything
7 that would show where existing pipelines might be?

8 A. I wouldn't know, sir.

9 Q. Okay.

10 MR. TURRELL: Dana? Mr. Lee.

11 MR. LEE: I have no questions.

12 MR. TURRELL: Brian? Brian Osborn.

13 MR. OSBORN: No, we don't have any questions.

14 MR. TURRELL: Harry?

15 MR. SCHWARTZ: No.

16 MR. TURRELL: Tom.

17 MR. MARCOTTE: No questions.

18 BY MR. TURRELL:

19 Q. Okay. I would just like you to acknowledge for the
20 record that this has been recorded and it is a public
21 statement, and it will eventually be part of the public record
22 in this investigation. And if you could just acknowledge that
23 for the recording, we'll end the interview.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. Thank you very much.

1 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
2 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of William Kennerson

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

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Interview of: DANA LEE

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Monday,
 October 16, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 3:30 p.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
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BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
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I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:30 p.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Good afternoon. It's 3:30 on Monday, October 16th. We're at the U.S. Coast Guard in Morgan City. We're interviewing Mr. Dana Lee of Athena Construction, LLC. And my name is Morgan Turrell. I'm with National Transportation Safety Board. And to my left?

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, B R I A N, Osborn, O S B O R N, with Gulfport Energy.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee with Athena Construction, D A N A, L E E.

MR. SCHLOTTERER: Brad Schlotterer, Kean Miller, here for Athena Construction and Dana Lee.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, U.S. Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, Chevron.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Thank you very much.

INTERVIEW OF DANA LEE

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Dana, if you would just go ahead and say your name and spell it and tell us how old you are please?

1 A. Dana Lee, D A N A, L E E. I'm 57.

2 Q. And what is your current occupation, sir?

3 A. I'm the General Manager of Athena Construction.

4 Q. And I understand Athena owns the barge, Athena 106,
5 that was involved in the accident?

6 A. Yes, sir, we do.

7 Q. Mr. Lee, if you can give us a brief professional
8 history of yourself?

9 A. I was in the Navy, back late sixties, early
10 seventies, came to Athena in 1976 as a roustabout, did some
11 welding for them. I'm a certified crane operator in probably
12 '78. In 1981, I became a construction foreman. I stayed on
13 the barge as a foreman for 20 years, and came to the office as
14 an estimator in 2000, and when we were purchased from Hellenic,
15 Incorporated, in February this year, I was promoted to General
16 Manager.

17 Q. Okay. And what is your -- as estimator for Athena
18 Construction, what is your day-to-day -- or now you're General
19 Manager.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Estimator and General Manager, what are those? Let's
22 just start with estimator. What's the job description for
23 estimator and then for General Manager?

24 A. You work with the oil companies or anybody that
25 wishes to hire us, doing a cost estimate of what the job would

1 consist of, you know, just a total cost. So maybe go on for a
2 day rate, whatever they would request from us.

3 Q. It would be like a sales type position or --

4 A. No, I do some sales, you know, visit clients, but
5 it's mostly estimating job costs.

6 Q. Okay. And now currently as General Manager, what are
7 your overall responsibilities?

8 A. The same as that plus I hire the new employees,
9 coordinate everything with the foremen through the oil
10 companies. Day-to-day, you know, the day-to-day operation of
11 the company.

12 Q. Okay. How many assets, barge assets, on water
13 assets, machinery, what -- how much -- can you give us an
14 overall idea of what --

15 A. We have 8 spud barges, the largest being 40 x 140.
16 We have 2 that are 40 x 130. The rest are 36 x 110. They're
17 all spud barges. We have a 40 x 16 jet propelled work boat.
18 We have two gasoline powered crew boats. Five of the barges
19 have cranes on them, ranging from a 50 ton to a 45 ton. At
20 this time, we do have a 35 ton on a -- it's just a deck barge,
21 working for Conoco-Phillips with one of our other construction
22 barges. All the construction barges are rigged with cranes to
23 do pile driving work, pipe work, hook up work, pipe-laying
24 work. We figured 30 years ago that it was better to rig each
25 barge where you could do everything instead of trying to

1 specialize, you know, per job.

2 Q. Can you give us a brief history of the Athena 106,
3 that barge?

4 A. We -- the parent company at the time had it built and
5 delivered it to the yard and said here it is. They owned a
6 shipyard in Mississippi, and it was busy work for them. And it
7 stayed just a material barge for, I don't know, maybe 10 years
8 or so, and then we put a crane on it.

9 Q. So basically Hellenic, Hellenic built that barge,
10 this one?

11 A. Yes, they had it built.

12 Q. And it was a material barge until 10 years ago, and
13 then you put a crane on it?

14 A. I'm not sure, you know, of the date that they put a
15 crane on it and everything. We just -- we would put different
16 equipment on it at a time, but as far as making it a full-time
17 construction barge, it may have been 15 years ago. I'm not
18 sure.

19 Q. Okay. So can you give us an idea of how often this
20 barge is being used out of 30 days of a month, how many days
21 this barge was in use?

22 A. Since Katrina, well, since the first of the year I'd
23 say probably 23 to 25 days, working days. I mean it's been on
24 site, you know, every day since it went into Gulfport's field.

25 Q. Okay. And when was that? Do you recall when that

1 was?

2 A. I have no idea. I could look back and find out for
3 sure.

4 Q. This year? Was it this year?

5 A. I'm not sure if it was this year or it was over there
6 last year.

7 Q. Okay. We'll ask Gulfport that.

8 A. Yeah, I don't know. I mean I could find that out and
9 let you know.

10 Q. Yeah, we'll get that information later. So give us
11 an idea of once you get instructions from an oil company, say
12 Gulfport, and they say they'd like some pilings or a particular
13 job, how does the barge supervisor get this information and act
14 on it?

15 A. If -- okay. Like this generator platform, or I think
16 that's what Billy's building now --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- Mr. Schwartz or one of the field operations
19 people, will tell Billy, okay, I need a generator platform over
20 there, tell him the size of the slab that he has or requests,
21 you know, we get some prices on or something, and Billy will
22 tell me what he's got. I'll draw out a little, you know, a
23 little drawing and if there's not one already there or, you
24 know, if he needs one.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. A lot of times it's like a heated platform or
2 something like that. It's just nine pile for a (indiscernible)
3 way. It's a six pile, you know, they've got enough experience
4 that they know what it takes to do it.

5 Q. Okay. And in order to do these jobs, do you
6 typically get charts of the area obstructions or you just --

7 A. No, because nobody knows what's under the water,
8 under the surface of the water.

9 Q. Who actually pays for the pilings themselves? Who
10 supplies those? Gulfport.

11 A. It depends on the --

12 Q. The contract.

13 A. -- project and everything. If it's a bid job, a lot
14 of times we do it. Right now we're pulling pilings from all
15 the abandonment and everything we're doing. So pilings are
16 very plentiful.

17 Q. Okay. And how many employees do you have altogether?

18 A. Around 40.

19 Q. Around 40.

20 A. Around 40, that's including the office and
21 everything. We're a small company.

22 Q. Okay. And do you have training for your barge
23 employees?

24 A. Yes, we do. Once we hire them, and they do the
25 physical and the drug screen and everything, we take them to --

1 and let them read the company policy manual, which I will have
2 for you.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Then we'll have them read a Keller's Safety Book and
5 take the tests that's in those. We have them watch probably
6 eight hours of video, and as we're getting bigger, we've
7 decided that we started -- we know -- we started with the last
8 people we hired, needed Safe Gulf Training because a lot of the
9 big companies are requiring it. So we're sending them to Young
10 Memorial to be indoctrinated, and most of our people that were
11 here last year, went through Safe Gulf Training. We brought it
12 in. We, we usually have once a year, we have a two day safety
13 training and we bring in an outside party and do safety
14 training for everybody. It kind of got messed up this year
15 because of the hurricanes and everything. It just -- we didn't
16 do it yet this year.

17 Q. Okay. And does this training also -- what's the
18 nature of the videotape training that you have if you recall?

19 A. It's rigger training. It's one of our, one of our
20 foreman I believe is on one of them and goes through the
21 different things that we do and everything. And what we do is
22 we take all of the employees, if they're new, even if they've
23 worked for another company doing the same thing, we red hat
24 them, and they wear red hardhats. That way anybody that comes
25 up to the barge will see that hat and know it's a new employee,

1 and they get pretty excited when they hit their six months and
2 they can get a white one and quite being a newbie.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And I mean even if they have 20 years of experience,
5 and they're new to the company, they wear a red hat.

6 Q. To your knowledge, were there any red hats on the
7 barge that day?

8 A. Three I believe.

9 Q. And do you recall the first names of those three
10 employees?

11 A. Cleveland, Albert and Terry.

12 Q. And what was their particular job duties on that
13 particular barge that day? Do you recall?

14 A. They're just roustabouts. They were learning, you
15 know, they were on-the-job training, learning the pile driving
16 operation and use the chainsaw, use the air drills, impact
17 wrenches, any, you know, the spud unit with no, you know, we
18 don't train anybody on a spud unit in the field. You know,
19 that's left, you know, at the yard or something, and usually
20 the operator will get on it or the senior roustabout if he's,
21 you know, if he's -- if the foreman feels he's secure that he
22 can use it or the foreman will get on it.

23 Q. So the foreman on that day was?

24 A. Kenny Rink.

25 Q. Okay. And he would responsible for the safety and

1 training of these red hats, basically looking out for them?

2 A. Yes, on-the-job training, and I mean a lot of times
3 the men, the younger men will go from barge to barge to see how
4 the different foremen work and just to learn.

5 Q. Okay.

6 MR. TURRELL: I'll turn it over to Brian.

7 BY MR. CURTIS:

8 Q. Brian Curtis, NTSB.

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. That was one of my questions. The workers, they
11 don't work with the same supervisor then. They jump around.

12 A. Most of them do 90 percent of the time. I mean if
13 somebody's shorthanded, somebody went to the doctor or
14 something, then you'd send another hand over and if I've got a
15 crew of six men, I'm going to send the least experienced.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. You know, it's just -- it's common nature to get rid
18 of, you know, to send over who -- where you don't have to worry
19 about them. You know, that's my newbie, I'll get rid of him.
20 And that's just the nature of the beast.

21 Q. Any requirements for personal protective equipment
22 that they're supposed to wear?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And how's it conveyed to them?

25 A. When we -- as soon as they finish our orientation,

1 before they leave on the job, we'll give them a bag with a
2 lifejacket, hard hat, safety glasses, ear plugs and we tell
3 them they need steel toed shoes, and if they can't afford them,
4 we have a store that they can go to, they can purchase them and
5 we will, you know, take a little bit out of their check each
6 week until it's paid for. I mean it's -- and all of that is
7 required every day on the barges, and that's why we give them a
8 bag in case they need to go from one barge to another, and we
9 tell them to bring it every night until you're permanently
10 assigned to a barge because you don't know, maybe the first
11 month, month and a half, where you're going to be every day.

12 Q. A little bit about the barge. I know it's not in the
13 Coast Guard inspection. Do you have a periodic inspection
14 program that you put it under or how often do they inspect it
15 or look at it?

16 A. The barges are looked at every day by the foreman. I
17 mean if you see something, you call us, and we'll, you know, do
18 what we can to take care of it. I know the 106 had a leak. We
19 had it up on dry dock. They couldn't find it. They finally
20 found the next day. The second day it was on dry dock, they
21 put a patch on it, brought it back to the field. They called
22 me about a week later and said, you know, water was coming back
23 in the hole, but it wasn't bad, and I said, well, we'll get it,
24 you know, get it back on the dry dock. Called around and
25 nobody could take it. Jay came by my house a week ago and

1 said, well, there was a lot of water that morning. I said
2 okay, no problem. I said I'll call tomorrow and get a dry
3 dock. We've got about another week of pulling pilings and
4 we'll be finished with the vibrator, and I can drop it off and
5 then we can do it. It's not a lot. It's maybe six inches
6 every morning and, you know, we can take care of that. It's
7 not getting any worse than that, and the way the barge was
8 listing there for about a month, there was no water in the hole
9 at all. It was -- he thought it was internal from one
10 compartment to the next.

11 Q. So the only time they out of the water is on an as
12 needed basis?

13 A. Yes. Yes, because our prior owners did not believe
14 in maintenance. Our new owners believe completely in it.

15 Q. The equipment, like the spud winch, does that have
16 like a period reconditioning it would go through or how was the
17 maintenance on that overseen?

18 A. We have a new maintenance schedule on them, now that
19 we have an equipment superintendent. Prior to that it was, if
20 the foreman, you know, somebody would tell the foreman it was
21 getting bad, the brakes were bad or whatever, we would get a
22 brake band and we would change them out ourselves or, you know,
23 just do what we had to do, change the silent chain or the
24 frictions. As needed, it would be repaired. I mean if a piece
25 of equipment was down, it was fixed. There was never any

1 question about that. It was --

2 Q. Was any record, written records kept on the
3 maintenance or just repaired?

4 A. I seriously doubt it.

5 Q. Okay. And any general problems, the guys would come
6 to you and say, the winch, we're having a problem with this
7 component.

8 A. If they would, it would be fixed.

9 Q. Are they all the same type of winch?

10 A. All of our winches are American 120Bs, all of ours.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have.

13 MR. TURRELL: Liam.

14 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

15 BY MR. LARUE:

16 Q. You mentioned Safe Gulf Training? Can you describe
17 that, what's involved in that?

18 A. I have no idea.

19 Q. You have no idea?

20 A. I have no idea. I know it's required by a lot of the
21 majors right now and it's basic, probably lock out, tag out,
22 entry, basically the same thing we were doing but it's doing --
23 it's being outsourced now and it's just a certification card.
24 You can go from employer to employer because the card travels
25 with you.

1 Q. And where did you say that was done?

2 A. Young Memorial, it's a vocational building here in
3 town.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. And it's exceptional.

6 Q. Young Memorial is the group that puts --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- it on?

9 A. They do that, they do dock training, water service --

10 Q. It's a community college?

11 A. Yes. It's exceptional. It's one of the best in the
12 state.

13 Q. Okay. Is there any specific rules or regulations
14 that they have on board when they're working on the barges, you
15 know, no smoking, anything at all?

16 A. It depends where you're at. If you're around, you
17 know, what you're doing, if you're under tow, you know, if a
18 person wants to smoke, sure, he can go outside. I mean there's
19 no smoking in enclosed areas which is the doghouse or the hole
20 or the crane. If you're working say on a platform, you're out
21 there working, you can come down from there, go to the back of
22 the barge and you can smoke. As far as what you're working, if
23 you're doing creosote work, you don't want to smoke because if
24 you bring a cigarette up to your mouth, you're going to burn
25 your lips. You'll feel it the next day. So most of them don't

1 smoke while they're driving pilings. You know, they learn the
2 hard way.

3 Q. Any other specific rules or regulations you have?

4 A. You know, wear your PPEs at all times. I don't know
5 what you mean.

6 Q. That's fine.

7 A. I mean you do what your foreman tells you to do. You
8 know, and if you have a question, they all have my number, and
9 they're not bashful about calling me.

10 Q. Okay. What about do you have any, you know, what
11 would be -- I'm thinking how to ask this. Is there any
12 direction for something like this happens, you know, if there's
13 a fire aboard ship? I mean --

14 A. Abandon ship, you know. You can't put it out. I
15 mean we have fire extinguishers all over the barge but -- and
16 we have life rings with ropes and everybody's got their PPEs,
17 and I don't know, what do you do in a train wreck?

18 Q. All right. Thank you.

19 MR. LARUE: That's all I've got.

20 BY MR. TURRELL:

21 Q. Just going back, how many hours does the employees
22 work?

23 A. The schedule they've been working lately is 5 and 2.
24 They work 12 hours landing to landing and an hour each way
25 travel time. And we also make -- one group's off Friday and

1 Saturday. The other group is off Sunday and Monday.

2 Q. Okay. And overtime, is there -- beyond that, if it's
3 necessary if something requires them to work overtime, how's
4 that addressed?

5 A. It's an as-needed basis. I mean some of the foremen
6 maybe want a weekend off next week. So they may work straight
7 through or some of the guys, you know, may want off and we have
8 enough people that some of the guys may want to work extra, if
9 they've got a birthday or something coming up, want a few
10 dollars and somebody else might want off, you know. One guy
11 will go from one barge to another barge, and --

12 Q. To your knowledge, Dana, the employees that were on
13 board, what their work schedule was on the days leading up to
14 the accident, to the best of your knowledge?

15 A. Kenny and them were off Friday and Saturday. They
16 were working Sunday through Monday. They were off Friday and
17 Saturday, and had been for I think for three weeks.

18 Q. So they worked Sunday through Thursday then?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So this was their last, last day on the job --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- for that week?

23 A. Yes, it was.

24 MR. TURRELL: Mr. Luff.

25 LT. LUFF: I have no questions.

1 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Do you have someone here from
2 Athena representing Athena --

3 MR. LEE: Representing me.

4 MR. TURRELL: I mean to ask questions, anyone from
5 Athena? Brian?

6 MR. CURTIS: I don't have any questions at this time.

7 MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, no questions.

8 MR. TURRELL: Tom?

9 MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, Chevron.

10 BY MR. MARCOTTE:

11 Q. Yeah, I have one question with regard to the brake
12 bands on the drums. Are there any adjustments for those or are
13 they periodically adjusted?

14 A. They have a turnbuckle underneath that if you feel
15 them getting loose or anything, you know, you go down there,
16 you break two lock nuts off, back them up, take your turnbuckle
17 up and you adjust it to you feel it. Just like a friction
18 crane. You know, your operator tells you when he needs it to
19 be adjusted.

20 BY MR. TURRELL:

21 Q. Who on the barge is authorized to make those
22 adjustments?

23 A. It's usually the foreman, the --

24 Q. Spud winch operator?

25 A. Yeah, the spud winch operator. He'll be in the seat

1 telling you, you know, if that's good or not because everybody
2 has, you know, different leg pressure, foot pressure, what's
3 comfortable for them. You don't want it too tight because
4 they'll never get it locked and if it's too loose, it'll pop
5 right off. So you loosen it -- I mean you adjust it to each
6 individual person.

7 Q. To the best of your knowledge -- you've operated a
8 spud winch before, right?

9 A. Oh, yes, many times.

10 Q. So can you tell me what in your experience is the
11 most common problem with the spud winch, the most common
12 complaint or malfunction in your experience?

13 A. The biggest complain is during winter when it won't
14 start and you have to carry a battery.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. You know, as far as the operation of it, they're
17 fantastic. Again, we use them because they're very low
18 maintenance. They're great winches.

19 Q. How often are the cables changed? Do you know if
20 they're changed on an annual basis or as needed?

21 A. As needed. You look at them, and if you think
22 they're getting bad, you change them. I mean we keep two new
23 cables on each barge, and as one is replaced, we replace the
24 one that's there.

25 Q. Okay. Do you know by chance when the last time the

1 brake bands were replaced or the cables were replaced on that
2 barge?

3 A. No, the cables were replaced two months ago. I think
4 it's two months, maybe three, but I know they were just
5 replaced because we just sent two out and we got all the
6 paperwork for that and everything, but we just changed those.

7 Q. And the brake bands?

8 A. The brake bands, I have no idea.

9 Q. Okay.

10 MR. TURRELL: Harry, did you have a question?

11 MR. SCHWARTZ: We are operating four Athena barges in
12 the field. That's why the rotation.

13 MR. TURRELL: Okay. I have no other questions.
14 Liam.

15 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

16 BY MR. LARUE:

17 Q. How heavy are those spuds?

18 A. 11,500 pounds. We figured it out this morning.

19 Q. Okay. 11,500 pounds. And obviously we've
20 established --

21 A. 11,500 pounds, yeah.

22 Q. -- we've established that you have all sorts of
23 experience out there.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. If nobody knows where these lines are, how do you not

1 hit them all the time or how do you --

2 A. You assume that there's one down there every time --

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. -- and you lower them gradually. You know, you don't
5 just go in there, take your foot off and let it bird nest
6 because if you do, it'll get ferried away and it can grab
7 (indiscernible). So you ease them down because like I tell
8 them all, if you can't hold it, it's hot.

9 Q. And so in your experience, sometimes you do bump into
10 these lines but --

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. -- since it's going slower --

13 A. Since it's going slower, that's why they're, you
14 know, you've got a long point instead of a short one. So
15 it'll, you know, it'll hit it and it'll slide off of it or if
16 it hits it, it stops, you'll pick it back up a little bit, the
17 crane will move it, and then you come down a little.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. LARUE: That's all I've got.

20 MR. TURRELL: Anyone else?

21 (No response.)

22 BY MR. TURRELL:

23 Q. Okay. Dana, did you have any comments or statements
24 you'd like to make while we're here? Is there anything you'd
25 like to add?

1 A. The only thing I wish is we could find the other two
2 bodies, so we could get closure for the families.

3 Q. Do you know the status of that?

4 A. I was at a funeral all morning.

5 Q. Okay. All right. Can you just acknowledge that this
6 is being recorded and is a public statement?

7 A. Yes, it is.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
10 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Dana Lee

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 16, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: RODNEY LEWIS

National Transportation Safety Board
 Washington, DC

Wednesday,
 January 10, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 10:25 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

HAROLD MERCER
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

GARY GAUDET
Central Boat Rentals

RUFUS HARRIS
Harris and Rufty
Attorney for Central Boat Rentals

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:25 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Okay. Good morning. It's January 10, 2007. It's about 10:25 Central Time. This is a telephone interview with Mr. Rodney Lewis. Three investigators here in National Headquarters, Washington, D.C. My name is Morgan Turrell. And to my right?

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis.

MR. TURRELL: And if you would kindly start in the room there with the Coast Guard and go around.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, with Athena Construction.

MR. MERCER: Harold Mercer (ph.) with Chevron.

MR. GAUDET: Gary Gaudet with Central Boat Rentals.

MR. HARRIS: Rufus Harris, representing Central Boat Rentals.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

MR. LEWIS: Rodney Lewis with Central Boat Rentals.

INTERVIEW OF RODNEY LEWIS

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Okay. Rodney, if you would spell your last name for us?

1 A. L E W I S.

2 Q. Okay. And what's your city and state of residence?

3 A. Morgan City.

4 Q. Okay. And I understand you have representation there
5 today. Is that right?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay. And you understand this is being recorded?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. And this is a public statement. Rodney, we
10 didn't get a chance to interview you, you know, a long
11 interview with you after the accident. You were hospitalized.
12 We did talk to you once before, and we appreciate your coming
13 in this morning for a quick re-interview. I'd like you to
14 start, if you could, to the best of your recollection, with a
15 basic timeline of that morning, just slowly step us through,
16 starting with the morning when you were working and right to
17 the accident, to the best of your knowledge.

18 A. That was October 12th, that morning. We went to
19 battery 2 after we moved a barge to battery 3. Then we moved
20 another barge back to the rig to drive pilings, and then that's
21 when the accident happened.

22 Q. Okay. And can you just tell us basically how long it
23 was when you left the one rig going to the accident site, how
24 long that was in time?

25 A. I couldn't really recommend. It was almost after

1 lunch really.

2 Q. Okay. Okay. Rodney, can you tell us, to the best of
3 your knowledge, whether you remember, you mentioned before at
4 the first interview that everyone was inside the doghouse.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. And you were facing inside the doghouse. Is that
7 correct?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. And can you describe inside the doghouse where
10 everyone was sitting to the best of your knowledge?

11 A. Some of them was standing at the doghouse windows and
12 some of them was sitting on the side.

13 Q. And do you remember how many people?

14 A. Not really. It was the crane operator. There were
15 six people --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- in the doghouse.

18 Q. Okay. And were they -- you said some were sitting
19 and some of them were standing?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Do you recall if -- do you know Mr. Dumesnil, the
22 other survivor?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. So you don't recall where he may have been?

25 A. I think he was in the doghouse, too. Everybody was

1 in the doghouse.

2 Q. Okay. Fine. You also mentioned at the last
3 interview, Rodney, where just before the accident occurred,
4 when you were on board the Miss Megan, that you were in the
5 wheelhouse with the captain, with Mr. Tossin.

6 A. No, I was on the barge.

7 Q. You were on the barge, okay. And you said -- in your
8 interview, you said the captain was talking on the radio or
9 usually spoke on the radio. I just have a question of who he
10 normally spoke with on the radio.

11 A. Not that I know of, he wasn't on the radio.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. After the accident occurred, after the
13 explosion --

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. -- and you mentioned you ran forward from the
16 doghouse to the crane, and you recall running. Do you recall
17 anyone running with you?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Okay. And just another couple of questions here. Do
20 you recall how long you were in the water?

21 A. It was quite a while.

22 Q. Okay. Can you give us just a half hour, one hour.

23 A. I'd say maybe an hour --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- or two.

1 Q. Okay. And finally, the last question I have for you
2 is, do you recall what type of training Central Boat provides
3 to you as an employee?

4 A. Just to be aware where you're at and what's going on
5 around you.

6 Q. Okay. So when they hired you, when you first started
7 working with Central Boat, did they do any formal interviews or
8 recurrent training?

9 A. Not that I know of.

10 Q. Okay. So you called them up and they hired you and
11 did they give you any employee handbooks of any kind or any
12 meetings or training?

13 A. No. I was already working for (indiscernible). I
14 was hired. I was already with the tug --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- when he sold the tugs.

17 Q. Okay. The last question. Do you recall if anyone --
18 you seen anyone smoking that day?

19 A. Not that I know of.

20 Q. Was smoking permitted on the barge or --

21 A. The barge it was, just right there by the doghouse.

22 Q. Okay. Is that where people normally smoked?

23 A. As far as I know they do.

24 Q. Okay. I'll turn it over to Liam here. Liam Larue.

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. Hey there, Rodney. How you doing?

2 A. I'm doing fine.

3 Q. Good. Good. You said you were standing outside of
4 the doghouse, correct?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. How far away from the doghouse would you say you
7 were?

8 A. I was right there by the door.

9 Q. Okay. So within a couple of feet of the doghouse?

10 A. Right in front the doghouse.

11 Q. Okay. What were you doing?

12 A. I was standing there.

13 Q. Were you talking to some of the other guys in the
14 doghouse?

15 A. I was listening to them talking and they was
16 eating --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- while we was moving.

19 Q. Do you remember what they were talking about?

20 A. No.

21 Q. I'm just trying to help you remember, trying to pin
22 down where people might have been sitting, if you might
23 remember what they were talking about, you might remember who
24 was in there and where they were sitting. Do you remember --
25 so where would people normally sit in the doghouse?

1 A. They'd sit on a couch that they got in the doghouse
2 and a chair.

3 Q. What side of the doghouse was the couch on?

4 A. It was on the backside of the doghouse, where the
5 window was.

6 Q. Okay. Do you remember who was sitting on the couch?

7 A. No, I sure don't.

8 Q. Okay. How about behind the desk?

9 A. I believe Kenny was sitting behind the desk.

10 Q. Okay. What about -- was there another chair in
11 there?

12 A. There was one chair.

13 Q. Okay. You said -- you, you were wearing a
14 lifejacket, a lifejacket. Is that correct?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Do you remember if anybody else was wearing
17 lifejackets?

18 A. They was all in the doghouse. I couldn't really say.

19 Q. Okay. You said you thought everybody was in the
20 doghouse, correct?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Do you remember seeing Albert in there?

23 A. Everybody was in there, the crane operator and all.

24 Q. Okay. Sorry I'm jumping around here. Back to the
25 lifejackets. So they were in the doghouse, and people didn't

1 usually wear lifejackets in the doghouse?

2 A. Not that I saw.

3 Q. Okay.

4 BY MR. TURRELL:

5 Q. You're at Central Boat. Morgan Turrell again,

6 Rodney. Do you recall who of the employees were what they call

7 red hats?

8 Are you familiar enough with the Athena employee?

9 A. Some of them, not all of them.

10 Q. Okay. I'll ask Athena later on. That's not
11 important.

12 MR. TURRELL: Brian. Brian Curtis will ask next.

13 BY MR. CURTIS:

14 Q. Hello, Rodney. It's good to hear you're feeling
15 better. I just have a couple. Back to what Liam was asking a
16 little bit, do we can get a clear layout of the doghouse, where
17 is the desk situated in the doghouse?

18 A. It's by another window by the door.

19 Q. Okay. So if you're looking in, it would be to the
20 right side?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. And where did they have their microwave set
23 up?

24 A. That would be to your left on a chair.

25 Q. Okay. Was that a big easy chair or something?

1 A. I believe so.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. It was either a easy chair or a regular chair.

4 Q. Okay. A little bit about -- now you're standing
5 there looking in the door. So you had your back to the spud
6 and the winch. Is that correct?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Did you hear it release or anything you heard with
9 the spud or the winch behind you at the time?

10 A. I heard a little ping noise.

11 Q. Okay. But you didn't see it. You didn't see the
12 spud deploy or anything strange in the winch going on?

13 A. No, sir. My back was still to the spud.

14 Q. Okay. And if you can recall, and I realize it's
15 difficult, from the time you heard that ping until the
16 explosion occurred, how long a timeframe was that? Do you
17 recall?

18 A. I'd say maybe 10, 15 minutes at the most.

19 Q. That's all I have. Thank you, Rodney. Glad to hear
20 you're better.

21 A. Thank you.

22 BY MR. TURRELL:

23 Q. Rodney, you're fully recovered and gone back to work?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Okay. Any lingering injuries at all?

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. Okay.

3 MR. TURRELL: John Luff, of the Coast Guard.

4 LT. LUFF: I have no further questions.

5 MR. TURRELL: Go around the room there.

6 MR. MERCER: This is Harold Mercer. No questions.

7 MR. LEE: Dana Lee. I have no questions.

8 MR. MARCOTTE: Tom Marcotte with Chevron, no
9 questions.

10 MR. GAUDET: Gary Gaudet with Central Boat, no
11 questions.

12 MR. HARRIS: No questions from Rufus Harris.

13 MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, with Gulfport, no
14 questions.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's everyone, Morgan.

16 BY MR. TURRELL:

17 Q. Okay, Rodney. Do you have anything else to add?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Okay. If you would just go ahead and confirm this is
20 recorded and we'll end the interview?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. Very good.

23 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
24 matter was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Rodney Lewis

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: January 10, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: RODNEY LEWIS

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Sunday,
 October 15, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 1:30 p.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL PATTERSON
Central Boat Rentals
Morgan City, Louisiana

HARRY SCHWARTZ
Gulfport Energy

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

TERRY MIRE
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:30 p.m.)

MR. TURRELL: And we're going to go around the room on our side and introduce who is here. My name is Morgan Turrell of the NTSB. It's 1:30, here in Morgan City, Louisiana, conducting an interview of Mr. Rodney Lewis, and to my left?

MR. PATTERSON: Michael Patterson with Central Boat Rentals.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, Engineering Investigator for the NTSB.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, Athena Construction.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, Coast Guard Marine Safety at Morgan City, Investigations Division.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. MIRE: Terry Mire (ph.), Chevron.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, Chevron.

INTERVIEW OF RODNEY LEWIS

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Okay. Rodney, if you would just give us your first name and last name and the city and state where you reside. If you'd just spell your name for us please.

A. Rodney Lewis. Rodney is R O D N E Y, Lewis,

1 L E W I S.

2 Q. Okay. And where do you -- what city and state do you
3 reside in Rodney?

4 A. Louisiana.

5 Q. Okay. Very good. And I understand you're an
6 employee of Central Boat. Is that correct?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. And how long have you been employed there?

9 A. Five years.

10 Q. And in what capacity do you work at Central Boat?
11 What's your job description?

12 A. Deckhand.

13 Q. Okay. And just describe your hand as a deckhand.
14 What are your normal duties?

15 A. Wash the boats and crane up, tie up barges, put
16 cables on the barges and move them and move them from section
17 to section.

18 Q. Okay. And how long have you, how long had you been
19 working there last week? Did you work there every day?

20 A. Yes, for a week.

21 Q. Okay. So what is your normal work schedule then?
22 Like 8:00 to 5:00 or how would you describe your work schedule?

23 A. It's 21/7.

24 Q. Okay. So it's 21 days on and 7 days off. Is that
25 correct?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. And when you were working in the 21 days, what
3 are your work hours?

4 A. I work from 6:00 in the morning to 4:30 in the
5 afternoon.

6 Q. Okay. And can you tell us -- just take us back to
7 the day before the accident, Rodney, if you just tell us what,
8 what you did the day before the accident, and then take us into
9 the day of the accident and what you experienced, okay.

10 A. Okay. We moved the rig. Are you ready?

11 Q. Yes. Go ahead.

12 A. We moved the rig that morning.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. We moved the rig and we come back to battery 2, got
15 Billy, and went and got some piling. We moved into battery 3
16 and we got that other single barge that was going to the rig
17 and we were going over to drive piling around it.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And I was outside mingling -- it was (indiscernible)
20 when we was going for the rig, to drive pilings around it, and
21 I was there with the customers.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We hooked onto them, and we was moving slow. We was
24 hooked on. The barges were side by side. We was hooked on the
25 deck barge. And we were going to the rig. All of a sudden I

1 hear something go boom, and then the barge -- the crane barge
2 jumped up and I ran. I ran and jumped off the crane barge,
3 where the crane was into the water.

4 Q. Okay. And how long were you in the water for?

5 A. I'd say maybe an hour, hour and a half at the most.
6 I really couldn't say.

7 Q. So you -- and then who picked you up?

8 A. A crew in this little boat, they picked me up out of
9 the water.

10 Q. Okay. So can you describe more in detail where you
11 jumped off the barge for me?

12 A. I jumped where the crane is, on the other end of the
13 barge.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. In the front (indiscernible) that's where I jumped
16 off the barge.

17 Q. Okay. So on the forward end or the spud side or --

18 A. No, no, straight, straight in front.

19 Q. Straight in front. Okay.

20 A. I jumped straight off the front.

21 Q. Okay. And Billy -- Rodney, can you tell us the
22 extent of your injuries please?

23 A. My arm, one of my arms is kind of bad and some of my
24 other arm and my forehead.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah, my face and the back of my head a little bit.

2 Q. And how are you doing?

3 A. I'm doing fine.

4 Q. Okay. And your prognosis is good for recovery?

5 A. Oh, Lord, yes.

6 Q. Okay. Very good.

7 A. My eyes just started opening.

8 Q. That's good news, sir. Can you describe a little bit
9 about -- before, before you took lunch to the construction
10 crew, can you describe any conversations you may have had with
11 the captain?

12 A. Not really. I was standing up there listening to
13 them talking.

14 Q. Okay. Do you recall what they were talking about?

15 A. No, I sure don't.

16 Q. Okay. And is that customary for you to be in the
17 pilot house of the Miss Megan. Is that correct?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. And so that's normally where you stay when -- is that
20 normally when you stay there, Rodney?

21 A. Yeah, when we moved the barge that day.

22 Q. Okay. And in that capacity, when you're in the
23 wheelhouse, what are you doing?

24 A. Sitting down while we're moving the barges.

25 Q. Okay. And so my understanding here is at lunchtime

1 you were in transit and you went down to bring lunch to the
2 construction crew on the crane barge. Is that right?

3 A. No, sir.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. They had their own lunch.

6 Q. They had their own lunch. So you went to join them
7 though. Is that right?

8 A. Yes, sir. Mingling with the crew.

9 Q. Okay. And when -- can you describe when you went
10 down to the crane barge, where were you when the explosion
11 happened?

12 A. I was by the doghouse.

13 Q. Okay. Were you inside the doghouse?

14 A. No, I was outside the doghouse.

15 Q. You were outside the doghouse. Now I understand that
16 there was a barbecue, is that correct, out in front of the
17 doghouse?

18 A. I couldn't say for sure.

19 Q. Okay. You didn't see it. I was just wondering if it
20 was. So was anyone else standing outside with you?

21 A. Not that I know of.

22 Q. Okay. Everyone was inside the doghouse then?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. Did you talk to anyone inside the doghouse?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. Okay. So you were just hanging out with them.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. And can you tell me how long it was when you
4 left the tugboat, the Miss Megan, and you went on board the
5 crane barge, can you tell me the elapsed -- how much time had
6 passed from the time you went from the Miss Megan to when you
7 heard the explosion?

8 A. Oh, I would say maybe 15, 20 minutes at the most.

9 Q. Okay. And can you -- to the best of your knowledge,
10 Rodney, can you tell me where you first senses either the heat
11 or where the explosion came from?

12 A. It started coming from behind the doghouse, where our
13 tug is usually at.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But we was hooked on the deck barge.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. And when I seen the water, when I seen the water pop
18 the boat, that's when I heard the explosion, and I just started
19 running.

20 Q. Okay. And how would you describe this? Was it like
21 an explosion where it just happened and then stopped or did it
22 continue or was there a big flame? Can you describe the fire
23 for us if you can?

24 A. I heard a boom and I started running.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And that's when I hit the water.

2 Q. Okay. I'll let one of our other investigators,
3 Mr. Liam Larue is going to ask you a couple of questions, okay.

4 A. Okay.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. I just have one question I think. Do you remember
7 seeing anybody else as you were running towards the front of
8 the crane barge?

9 A. I was thinking about myself.

10 Q. And you didn't see anybody else, you know, behind you
11 or beside of you?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. You didn't see anybody else around you at all?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. How about when you entered the water? Did you see
16 anyone else in the water?

17 A. I didn't see nobody in the water.

18 Q. Okay. And could you go into a little bit more detail
19 about what you did when you were in the water? Did you swim
20 away from the barge? Did you -- what happened at that point?

21 A. Yeah, I was trying to swim away from the barge. The
22 tide kept pushing me back, and I went under the barge, and then
23 I got from under the barge, and then I saw flames over the
24 barge, the deck barge, and I kept swimming out further. I
25 didn't let the tide push me back anymore. I kept swimming away

1 from it. And then the tide pushed me more to the crane barge,
2 and I kind of went under the edge a little bit, and then I got
3 on the other side of the crane barge, and that's where Billy
4 and them picked me up at.

5 Q. Okay. And you didn't see anybody else in the water
6 while you were there?

7 A. No, sir.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

9 MR. TURRELL: And Brian Curtis from the NTSB now.

10 BY MR. CURTIS:

11 Q. Good afternoon, Rodney. Just one question. Were you
12 -- when it happened, were you by the door of the doghouse or
13 were you beside it or where were you exactly? Do you remember?

14 A. I was by the door.

15 Q. Okay. Were all the crew in the doghouse or were they
16 outside at the time?

17 A. They was inside the doghouse.

18 Q. Okay. Did you notice anybody over near the spud
19 winch area or were they all in the doghouse?

20 A. No, they were all in the doghouse.

21 Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thanks, Rodney.

22 A. Thank you.

23 BY LT. LUFF:

24 Q. Hi. My name is John Luff. I'm with the Coast Guard.
25 A couple of questions. When you're usually underway on the

1 tug, do you usually have all the doors open on the tugboat?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. When you're underway on the spud barge, and
4 you heard the boom, right before the boom, was the vessel still
5 underway or had it stopped or anything unusual happen before
6 the boom?

7 A. No, it was still moving. It was moving slow.

8 Q. Had anything happened on the deck of the barge like
9 any equipment move or anything like that, anything with the
10 spuds or with the crane or anything?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. And just to reiterate, you were right near the door
13 of the doghouse?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. So you didn't see like if a spud had fallen or
16 anything like that?

17 A. No, I had my back to the spuds.

18 Q. Before you jumped off, between -- right before when
19 the boom happened and when you jumped off, you hadn't seen
20 anybody else outside on the deck barge?

21 A. No.

22 LT. LUFF: I have no further questions.

23 MR. TURRELL: Michael Patterson.

24 MR. PATTERSON: I don't have any questions, Rodney.

25 MR. TURRELL: Dana Lee from Athena Construction.

1 BY MR. LEE:

2 Q. Rodney, the crane operator, Mr. John --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- was he eating his lunch in the crane like he
5 usually does or do you know?

6 A. No, he was in the doghouse.

7 Q. Okay. So everybody with Athena was in the doghouse
8 including Kenny?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. LEE: That's all I have.

12 MR. SCHWARTZ: Gulfport doesn't have any questions.

13 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Chevron.

14 MR. MARCOTTE: No question.

15 BY MR. TURRELL:

16 Q. Just a couple of questions there, Rodney. When you
17 said everyone was in the doghouse, can you tell us what anyone
18 was doing inside the doghouse? Did you notice them cooking or
19 was the fan on or did you notice anything inside that was going
20 on?

21 A. The fan was on and they was eating lunch.

22 Q. Okay. Did you notice anyone over by the -- I guess
23 there was a microwave oven in there. Did you notice anyone
24 over by the oven?

25 A. They had a microwave in there. They was heating up

1 their lunch.

2 Q. Okay. So you noticed all the construction workers
3 were all in the doghouse then. Is that correct?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. And I really appreciate your time, Rodney. You
6 understand that we'll probably have to ask you to perhaps make
7 another statement some other time. We have a couple of more
8 questions here, but I just wanted to get that from you, and
9 also we'd like to have your medical records. And so,
10 Mr. Patterson and Rufus there, are going to help you do that.
11 Is that okay with you?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Okay. And so you just work with Mr. Patterson and
14 Mr. Harris, and they'll help the NTSB do that for you. We have
15 just a couple of more questions, but I just wanted to give you
16 my thanks in advance, okay. The Coast Guard is going to ask
17 another question.

18 BY LT. LUFF:

19 Q. Was there any equipment running on deck at the time,
20 like a generator or anything like that?

21 A. Not that I knowed of. Not that I know of.

22 Q. The doghouse, for the equipment in there, how did
23 they usually get the power? Was it like an extension cord from
24 the tug or do you know if it was running on batteries or
25 anything else?

1 A. Well, they had a generator, but I don't know if they
2 was running it that day.

3 Q. Okay. And was that -- go ahead.

4 A. Because we was under (indiscernible) that day.

5 Q. Uh-huh. The generator, was it like a small little
6 gas generator near the doghouse or was it a larger generator
7 for the equipment or what?

8 A. Yeah, it was a gas -- I think it's gas or diesel. I
9 don't remember which one it was.

10 Q. Was it small or large?

11 A. It's kind of small.

12 Q. Okay.

13 MR. TURRELL: Brian.

14 BY MR. CURTIS:

15 Q. Rodney, Brian Curtis again, NTSB. Just one question.
16 I don't recall exactly how you put it before but we have
17 indications that after the spud had dropped, were you away
18 aware at the time that it was -- by noise or sight that it had
19 dropped? Were you aware that they were coming down?

20 A. Yeah, I heard something go bing and I guess it was a
21 spud. I heard that boom noise after something went bing, and
22 then I ran.

23 Q. So you heard what you refer to the bing noise, how
24 long between that and the explosion? Do you recall?

25 A. I'd say maybe two to three minutes.

1 Q. So that first bing noise came from the direction of
2 the winch. Is that correct?

3 A. Come back again, sir.

4 Q. Where did the sound of the bing -- do you recall
5 where the bing sound came from on the barge?

6 A. From behind me.

7 Q. Okay.

8 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have. Thank you, Rodney.

9 MR. LEE: This is Dana Lee again, with Athena
10 Construction.

11 BY MR. LEE:

12 Q. You heard the explosion behind the doghouse first or
13 the bing noise first?

14 A. I heard the bing noise first.

15 Q. And then the explosion, I mean then the boom?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. TURRELL: Anyone else here? Brian.

19 BY MR. TURRELL:

20 Q. Okay. I think we're finished here. We'd like to
21 stop the recording at this point. You do understand this is
22 being recorded, Rodney?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay.

25 MR. TURRELL: We're going to end the recording at

1 this point.

2 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
3 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Rodney Lewis

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: October 15, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: MICHAEL PATTERSON

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Tuesday
 October 17, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 10:15 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

GARY GAUDET
Central Boat Rentals

DAVID ADAMS
Central Boat Rentals

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

HENRY SCHWARTZ
Gulfport Energy

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

TERRY MIRE
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

RUFUS HARRIS
Harris and Rufty
Counsel for Central Boat Rentals

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:15 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Good morning. This is Morgan Turrell, NTSB. We're in Morgan City, Louisiana, at the Coast Guard Station, conducting an interview with Michael Patterson of Central Boat Rentals, at 10:15, and to my left, if you would say your name and spell it please.

MR. GAUDET: Gary Gaudet, G A U D E T.

MR. ADAMS: David Adams, with Central Boat Rentals.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron.

MR. MIRE: Terry Mire (ph.), with Chevron.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee with Athena.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, that's B R I A N, O S B O R N, Gulfport Energy.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Henry Schwartz, Gulfport Energy.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON: My name is Michael Patterson, M I C H A E L, P A T T E R S O N. I'm with Central Boat Rentals.

MR. TURRELL: And you're represented here today?

MR. HARRIS: Rufus Harris, attorney for Central Boat

1 Rentals, with the firm of Harris and Rufty in New Orleans.

2 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL PATTERSON

3 BY MR. TURRELL:

4 Q. Okay. Mr. Patterson, how old are you?

5 A. I'm 41.

6 Q. Okay. And what is your current employment?

7 A. I work for Central Boat Rentals in the capacity of
8 General Manager and Vice President.

9 Q. What's your city and state of residence?

10 A. I live in Berwick, Louisiana.

11 Q. Spell it.

12 A. Berwick, B E R W I C K.

13 Q. Louisiana.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. And how long have you worked for Central Boat?

16 A. Since 1989.

17 Q. And how long have you been in your current position
18 as GM and VP?

19 A. Probably since 1998.

20 Q. What are your day-to-day duties require?

21 A. I manage the risk management for the company. I
22 manage the financing for the company, insurance and pretty much
23 deal with operations, personnel and safety.

24 Q. And you are the operator of the Miss Megan. Is that
25 correct?

1 A. That is correct.

2 Q. How many vessels does Central Boat have?

3 A. Approximately 33 motor vessels and approximately 160
4 inland and offshore barges.

5 Q. How many vessels like the Miss Megan do you operate?

6 A. Probably 15, 16.

7 Q. Okay. How many employees, marine employees do you
8 have?

9 A. About 125.

10 Q. And so you were the employer of the two that were on
11 board the Miss Megan that day?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. And you recall their names?

14 A. Tim Tossin (ph.) and Rodney --

15 Q. Uh-huh. He was the captain of the vessel.

16 Q. And?

17 A. Rodney Lewis.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. He was the deckhand on the Miss Megan.

20 Q. Okay. And how long do you recall Captain Tossin
21 working for you?

22 A. Since 2001, about July 2001.

23 Q. And Mr. Lewis?

24 A. Approximately the same time, July 2001.

25 Q. Michael, can you take us back to the day of the

1 incident on October 12th? If you would recall your account of
2 that day.

3 A. I was having lunch here in Morgan City. I received a
4 call from one of my operations managers, Eddie Robashow (ph.).
5 He informed me that there was an explosion and a fire on the
6 Miss Megan and that the crew could not be located.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I then went back to the office and started talking to
9 the -- I talked -- we had a conversation in the operations
10 department. I informed my insurance underwriters of the
11 accident. We also talked to the Sheriff's Department, and we
12 spoke to the tugboat captain, Herb (indiscernible), on the
13 Yancy O, and we also lined up a seaplane and flew out to the
14 location.

15 Q. Okay. And?

16 A. About 2:30 in the afternoon, we flew out to Cote
17 Blanche Bay and circled around out there for probably 20
18 minutes, 15 to 20 minutes just assessing the situation and by
19 that -- by the time we got in the plane, we had an idea that
20 Tim's body was probably on the deck of the Miss Megan, and that
21 I don't know if Rodney had been located, but there were rumors
22 flying around all day from the point I heard about it that,
23 yes, they were alive, yes, they were accounted for and no, they
24 weren't alive, no, they weren't accounted for, but right before
25 we got on the seaplane, it was confirmed in my mind that, that

1 Timmy had died on the boat because they had a body on the deck
2 of the boat.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. And that information came from Herb with South
5 Central Towing, Herb (indiscernible). He had the boat on a tow
6 line and was trying to take it out of the field because it was
7 on fire at that time. He was trying to get it out of the
8 field, in order not to cause, you know, to protect it from
9 causing any more damage to the field.

10 Q. Uh-huh. Which boat did he have under tow?

11 A. He had -- the Yancy O, I believe it was the Yancy O
12 or Miss Joanne had the Miss Megan in tow, taking it out of the
13 field. He either had the -- he was either made up to the barge
14 or to the boat and barge. I don't know exactly how he was made
15 up.

16 Q. Roughly what time would he have been made up and --

17 A. This was probably in the neighborhood of about 1:30.

18 Q. Okay. And you notified the Sheriff here?

19 A. My office called the Coast Guard. We had a
20 conversation with the Sheriff, and just on, you know, the
21 general situation at hand, the fact that they had, they had,
22 you know, people -- they had vessels on site trying to locate
23 the missing.

24 Q. Okay. Did you make any calls?

25 A. Did I make any calls?

1 Q. Besides to the insurance company, the insurer.

2 A. No. I made calls to -- I visited with the Sheriff
3 and also visited with the seaplane base.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I didn't make any notification calls.

6 Q. But you had other people doing that?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Can you tell us what you know about Captain Tossin?
9 And then the same thing, about the deckhand, Mr. Lewis.

10 A. I knew Timmy fairly well. He is a very experienced
11 captain. He worked on the Miss Megan since it was -- when the
12 boat was constructed, sometime around 1996, and he was the
13 captain on the boat at the time. We bought the boat in 2001,
14 and he was the captain on the boat in 2001 when we purchased
15 it, and he stayed on board with us, and was a very experienced
16 captain, knew the field, was well respected amongst all the
17 companies that we worked for. We worked for Gulfport. We
18 worked for Chevron. We worked for Texaco, and he would always
19 tell me, Mike, if you all can't find any work for the boat,
20 don't worry about it, because I'll find work for it. So he was
21 a well respected captain in the industry and everybody that
22 came in contact with him would say the same thing about him,
23 that he was kind of a go to guy, you know, you could count on
24 him to get the job done and was very experienced in his
25 business, in his livelihood.

1 Q. Do you recall if he was a smoker or not? We're
2 trying to determine the instant source of the fire?

3 A. I don't believe he was a smoker.

4 Q. Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the Miss
5 Megan? Can you tell us a little bit about the boat?

6 A. The boat's approximately 50 feet long, 20 feet wide,
7 and has a draft of 6 feet, total draft of 6 feet.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It's a (indiscernible) push boat with a flat bottom
10 and two push knees, has a Detroit 8P71 engines with twin disk
11 gears, probably made up to a 4 inch shaft, and probably 40 inch
12 wheels. The boat has either 2 or 2 1/2. Is it 2 1/2? The
13 levels on the boat. There's the first level and then -- 2 1/2
14 levels are decks, 2 1/2 decks.

15 Q. Uh-huh.

16 A. And that's about all.

17 Q. It was a rigger which was an uninspected vessel?

18 A. It was an uninspected towing vessel, yes, sir.

19 Q. And when was the last time that the Coast Guard went
20 on board the vessel to your knowledge?

21 A. It was probably in August.

22 LT. LUFF: We actually have that on record for NTS
23 verification and also for a UTV inspection -- safety inspection
24 as well on our files.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

1 BY MR. TURRELL:

2 Q. And to your knowledge, where there any deficiencies
3 in the boat in general, any problems, mechanical or --

4 A. No, sir.

5 Q. When was the last time the Miss Megan was --

6 A. In port.

7 Q. -- in port or repaired or had any maintenance?

8 A. I believe it was last week. We had an engine that
9 was either overhauled or swung. What I mean swung, a rebuilt
10 engine is put in its place and the old engine is removed.

11 Q. Which engine?

12 A. I don't know.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. It wasn't main propulsion. None of the main engines.

15 Q. Uh-huh. Do you recall the last time the vessel was
16 hauled out?

17 A. It was probably hauled out at the end of July.

18 Q. Were there any deficiencies or problems with the hull
19 at that time?

20 A. We have a list of repairs that was done at that time.
21 I think we had some (indiscernible) coolers that we changed,
22 probably the wheels and shaft we changed, but we have a, we
23 have a detailed list of what was repaired.

24 Q. What's the normal work routine to your knowledge?
25 Can you tell us the general work routine for Captain Tossin and

1 Rodney Lewis?

2 A. They worked out in the Ivanhoe fields, the Cote
3 Blanche field, out of Ivanhoe dock. Generally worked
4 production and drilling for Gulfport Energy. It was -- a
5 single captain and a single deckhand. So basically operated in
6 the neighborhood of 12 hours a day.

7 Q. Okay. And roughly, their work schedule during the
8 week, how many days a week?

9 A. I believe they worked seven days a week.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And as far as the schedule, Tim's schedule, I'm not
12 familiar with Tim's schedule.

13 Q. We'll get that from a HR person. To your knowledge,
14 did Captain Tossin have any issues or anything that would
15 impact his work?

16 A. He was going through a divorce but I don't know that
17 that reflected on his work. We didn't see any change in his
18 work habits, any negative changes in his work habits as a
19 result of his going through the divorce.

20 Q. And does Central Boat provide physical examinations
21 for crew members?

22 A. We have not, unless there was something that affects
23 his license. If he were to have a heart attack or a stroke or
24 something of that nature, or an injury or accident, we would
25 send him to our doctor to verify that he was physically fit to

1 run the boat. I believe his licensing requirements would cause
2 him to have a physical every five years.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So unless some issue, some kind of medical or health
5 issue came up, we would not randomly send him to the doctor for
6 a physical examination.

7 Q. And drug test policy?

8 A. We have, we have a drug testing policy that would
9 require all employees to participate and it would basically --
10 a test would occur either for pre-employment or for random, you
11 know, we would pick a name out of the hat for post accident or
12 for reasonable cause.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So I don't know if he's had one. Coast Guard
15 requires it to be random of nature --

16 Q. Sure.

17 A. -- instead of 50 percent of the workforce being
18 tested or 75 percent or 100 percent. They like that random
19 nature of testing, and I don't know that there were any other
20 issues in the last six months that would require him to be drug
21 tested.

22 Q. Sure. To your knowledge then, he has never tested
23 positive to your knowledge?

24 A. No, sir. He's never testified positive.

25 Q. And can you tell us his work schedule in the days

1 preceding his working, confirm his working the days before the
2 accident?

3 A. Yeah, I can, I can probably get that. I can get that
4 information.

5 Q. Okay. And do you know just generally his work
6 routine when he was at home, and how far away he worked -- he
7 lived from the work site and so forth? Do you know his
8 routine?

9 A. Yeah, unless he received permission from the -- from
10 Gulfport or from Harry, he should have stayed on the boat
11 during his time on the boat.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So if he had a 21 and 7 schedule or a 14 and 7
14 schedule, he would be required to stay on that boat.

15 Q. He was staying on the boat?

16 A. Yeah, he would stay on the boat. There are times
17 when, when crew members are allowed to go home, and I think in,
18 in the nature of his work, working so closely with the field
19 production managers, I believe, you know, there could have been
20 times when he was allowed to go home.

21 Q. And where were his quarters on the boat?

22 A. I believe there's probably a bed on the upper level
23 just below the wheelhouse.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Just behind the wheelhouse or the powerhouse of the

1 boat.

2 Q. What's the boat that would be the closest, similar to
3 the Miss Megan, a sister vessel of some sort?

4 A. Miss Katherine.

5 Q. Is it nearby? Is it local?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: White Lights (ph.).

7 MR. TURRELL: It's in White Lights, okay.

8 BY MR. TURRELL:

9 Q. What other boat might be --

10 A. Captain Gus would be --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or we can try to find a vessel
12 for you that would be similar.

13 MR. TURRELL: Yeah.

14 BY MR. TURRELL:

15 Q. Do you have any photographs of the Miss Megan, any
16 recent photographs?

17 A. Yes, we do.

18 Q. You do. Great. The vessels, I believe vessels found
19 with the ports open, the crew member mentioned that it's a
20 habit to leave all the ports open. Does Central Boat have any
21 policies or procedures regarding operation under way and
22 closing or opening doors or anything like that?

23 A. I'm not sure of the exact procedures, but from a
24 practical standpoint, if a boat were working in open water --

25 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. -- where the wave conditions were serious, then they
2 would be required to be closed, but in an inland situation
3 where you have a controlled weather environment, we would not
4 likely have a policy requiring doors to be closed.

5 Q. So it was normal to operate with the doors open?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay. And as far as any -- we're looking for an
8 ignition source, you know, one of the things we're looking at
9 is -- can you tell us from your experience what may have been
10 the ignition source aboard the Miss Megan?

11 A. I don't know if, if the exhaust could have possibly
12 been an ignition source or --

13 Q. I'm just trying to --

14 A. I don't have any, any beliefs.

15 Q. You can just speculate.

16 A. Yeah, speculation in a pure sense. I don't really
17 know one way or the other.

18 Q. All right.

19 MR. TURRELL: Liam Larue.

20 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

21 BY MR. LARUE:

22 Q. Just a couple of questions for you. You said after
23 you received the call from your office manager, you went to the
24 office and made some phone calls and in one of them you talked
25 to the captain of the Yancy O. Do you remember the content of

1 that conversation?

2 A. No, I didn't have a conversation directly. Basically
3 I was trying to get firsthand information on what was taking
4 place at the time. I was genuinely concerned about the fire on
5 the vessel, being a problem for something in the field, the
6 wells in the field, and when he told me that -- one thing he
7 told us, he told my operations guys, was the fact that he had
8 the boat. He had control of the boat, and was trying to get
9 the boat out of the field. So that addressed one of my
10 concerns, and then at the same time, he, he wasn't sure where
11 Timmy was, but he didn't -- either in that conversation or
12 another conversation later on, he did confirm that there was a
13 body that he could see on the boat.

14 Q. When you were up in the seaplane, do you remember
15 whatever vessels you saw out there?

16 A. We saw the two drilling rigs. We saw -- I saw the
17 spud barge, the construction barge, the Athena barge. Also we
18 saw the Miss Megan, the (indiscernible) deck barge. They had a
19 jack up boat that was alongside of the deck barge. They had
20 the Miss Joanne and they had the Yancy O. The jack up boat,
21 the Yancy O and the Miss Joanne were all adjacent to the Miss
22 Megan and the (indiscernible) barge.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. They had other vessels, smaller vessels, I guess
25 search and rescue vessels running around also, and I'm not sure

1 if they were Coast Guard, the Sheriff, or if they were
2 recreational vehicles -- vessels.

3 Q. Do you have any other kind of training that you
4 require of your employees other than the basic Coast Guard
5 requirements that are out there?

6 A. We have, we have records of what training they went
7 through. We have a safety manual on the vessel that, that they
8 pull weekly safety -- they get topics from the safety manual to
9 conduct weekly safety meetings and training meetings and -- but
10 as far as any required training outside of the Coast Guard's
11 requirement, we don't have any specific requirements.

12 Q. Do you record the weekly safety meetings anywhere?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And do you have any sort of procedures for if
15 there is an emergency that happens out there for your crew
16 boat? What would you expect them to do?

17 A. Well, in addition to the safety manual, each vessel
18 is equipped with an oil spill response manual, and the oil
19 spill response manual dictates what measures need to be taken
20 in the event of a spill or fire and explosion, and we do have
21 procedures in place for those such accidents. But most of
22 that, most of that revolves around the operation of a, of a,
23 you know, pushing a barge that might have a flammable material.
24 So most of the focus in that manual is on, on pollution but
25 there are also -- there are areas in that manual that address

1 specific responses that the crew needs to take in the event of
2 an explosion and a fire.

3 Q. Okay. And I know it's not really -- it wouldn't have
4 mattered in this case, but what sort of fire fighting
5 capabilities do these vessels have?

6 A. There's a, there's a CO2 on the back, on the back of
7 the vessel. It's a single cylinder -- single fire extinguisher
8 that's, I don't know, how many cubic inch that thing is, and
9 then in addition to that, the Coast Guard requires that they
10 have a fire pump on board, and I think all of that was -- you
11 could see all that in action because the Yancy O was rigged up
12 with the same kind of fire pump and fire fighting equipment.
13 In addition, there's a heat sensor over each engine on the
14 vessel that would notify the vessel of -- notify the crew of a
15 fire in the engine room.

16 Q. All right. Thank you.

17 MR. LARUE: That's all I have.

18 BY MR. TURRELL:

19 Q. I just have one question. When you were in the
20 seaplane, can you tell us what time that would have been when
21 you were on the seaplane?

22 A. Probably if I had -- probably between 3:00 and 3:45.

23 Q. So at that time, the construction barge was separated
24 from the deck barge and Miss Megan?

25 A. Yes.

1 MR. TURRELL: Brian Osborn.

2 MR. OSBORN: I don't have any questions.

3 MR. TURRELL: Okay. John.

4 BY LT. LUFF:

5 Q. Do you know if a drug and alcohol screening has been
6 done for Rodney?

7 A. It had not been done yet, and that should have been
8 done at the hospital. It's our policy, you know, post-
9 accident. It should have been done at Iberia General. That
10 was the first hospital that Rodney -- where Rodney received his
11 examination. But somehow, it slipped through the, it slipped
12 through the cracks (indiscernible) that was taking place.

13 Q. Okay.

14 LT. LUFF: I have no further questions.

15 MR. OSBORN: I have a one question.

16 MR. TURRELL: Brian Osborn.

17 MR. OSBORN: This is Brian Osborn from Gulfport
18 Energy.

19 BY MR. OSBORN:

20 Q. I'm just trying to clarify the experience Timmy had
21 in the field. You bought the company -- he had been working in
22 the field for a previous company that you acquired. What was
23 the name of that?

24 A. Gaudet Boat Rentals, and we actually purchased
25 Gaudet's fleet in 2001, and before, before Gaudet Boat Rentals

1 -- well, I believe he worked for Gulfport and he worked for
2 Texaco and he worked for Chevron a while. He was working for
3 Gaudet Boat Rentals, but he did work -- he did have experience
4 and time in the field.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just want to clarify that he
6 had been there for several years. It was prior to 2000.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1986 -- 1996, I believe when
8 the boat was constructed. He's been with that boat ever since.

9
10 MR. PATTERSON: And that boat worked, worked probably
11 between Coastal City and (indiscernible) Island. So he worked
12 not just that field, but he's worked other inland fields.

13 BY MR. TURRELL:

14 Q. Doing the same work?

15 A. Doing the same type of work, construction, drilling.

16 Q. So can you, from your knowledge, the work out there,
17 how is it that the captain determines where to place the barge?

18 A. I'm sure Timmy had an understanding of the field,
19 having spent all the time in the field. I'm sure it would be
20 some kind of, you know, this is not -- this is -- we have
21 information on, on his thinking. We have some old safety
22 meetings that he conducted on, you know, the way he approached
23 the spudding and the location of equipment, and I will just say
24 we can take a look at that and use that as a reference on how
25 he, how he approached that job.

1 Q. So, the other vessels in your fleet, how, how do they
2 approach?

3 A. Well, it's generally a coordinated effort between the
4 customer and the boat captain on the placement of the barge,
5 taking in consideration the flow lines, pipelines and what work
6 needs to be done, you know, exactly where do you need to place
7 the barge to get the work accomplished.

8 Q. So to your knowledge are there -- has the captain --
9 is the captain provided with charts or navigation instruments
10 to place the barge in a specific location to do this work or to
11 do the customer's work?

12 A. No, we don't provide anything that would, that would
13 help locate pipelines. We --

14 Q. It's up to the customer then?

15 A. Well, we would -- we do rely on information from the
16 customer to place such equipment.

17 MR. TURRELL: Dana.

18 MR. LEE: I have no questions at this point.

19 MR. TURRELL: Tom?

20 MR. MARCOTTE: No, no questions.

21 MR. TURRELL: Gary?

22 MR. GAUDET: No questions.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

24 MR. TURRELL: Liam.

25 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

1 BY MR. LARUE:

2 Q. I just want to clarify. Who do they receive their
3 day-to-day instruction on what exactly they're doing?

4 A. They would work with Gulfport or some, some
5 representative of Gulfport to get orders for the day.

6 MR. TURRELL: Henry?

7 MR. SCHWARTZ: No question.

8 BY MR. TURRELL:

9 Q. Michael, is there anything you'd like to add to this
10 or did anything jar your memory, any additional statements?

11 A. I don't have any at this time, no, sir.

12 Q. Okay.

13 LT. LUFF: I have one.

14 MR. TURRELL: John Luff.

15 BY LT. LUFF:

16 Q. On the vessel they still had GPS and electronic
17 charts and everything. So they knew where the (indiscernible)
18 would be --

19 A. Yes, they had radar. Also they had GPS on board.
20 And also a transponder for Coast Guard.

21 Q. AIS.

22 A. Yes, AIS, yes, sir.

23 Q. Do you know if they also had electronic charting tied
24 into the GPS like a captain program or something like that?

25 A. I'm not sure on that boat. Some boats are equipped

1 with electronic charts. I'm not sure of the type of --

2 MR. TURRELL: We've got an equipment list somewhere
3 because we went on board and -- okay. Does anyone else have
4 any questions?

5 BY MR. TURRELL:

6 Q. Okay. Michael, if you would just acknowledge that
7 this is being recorded, it's a public statement, and we'll
8 conclude the interview.

9 A. Yes, I understand that our interview was recorded.

10 Q. Thank you.

11 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
12 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Michael Patterson

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 17, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: JONATHAN PRINCE

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Monday,
 October 16, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 4:10 p.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

HARRY SCHWARTZ
Gulfport Energy

JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction

BO UNDERWOOD
Grasso Production Management

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:10 p.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Good afternoon. It's Monday, October 16th. It's about 10 minutes past 4:00. We're in the Coast Guard Station in Morgan City, Louisiana. My name is Morgan Turrell with the National Transportation Safety Board, and to my right?

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Harry Schwartz, S C H W A R T Z, Gulfport Energy.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, with Chevron.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, with Gulfport Energy.

MR. UNDERWOOD: Bo Underwood, Grasso Production Management.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, Athena Construction.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. TURRELL: And we're here today, we're interviewing a Grasso employee, who was on board a nearby vessel. His first name is Jonathan, last name is Prince.

INTERVIEW OF JONATHAN PRINCE

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. And, Jonathan, if you would just tell me what city and state you live in?

1 A. Iberia.

2 Q. Iberia, Louisiana. Okay. And Jonathan, how old are
3 you?

4 A. Forty-one.

5 Q. Forty-one. And, Jonathan, who are you employed by?

6 A. Grasso Production Management.

7 Q. And what is your job description? What do you do?

8 A. Field hand.

9 Q. Field hand. Okay. And how long have you done that?
10 How long have you been employed by Grasso?

11 A. It'll be 8 years in November.

12 Q. And before working for Grasso, did you work in the
13 oil fields?

14 A. Yes, I worked for PSI (indiscernible) Production
15 System.

16 Q. And how long did you work for PSI?

17 A. Five years.

18 Q. Okay. And, Jonathan, can you tell us, last Thursday,
19 where you were and what you saw in relation to the Athena barge
20 accident?

21 A. Yeah, I was working on (indiscernible) 48 and I was
22 calling Wayne to come over to pressure up the jack from battery
23 2, to make sure we have no leaks, and that's when I noticed a
24 fire in the back, you know, to the southeast, I mean southwest,
25 and Wayne, I told him, I guess a rig's on fire or something,

1 and then I said, well, no, that it ain't a rig. It's a -- both
2 rigs are right here. I say, look again and it was an Athena
3 barge and I seen the crane, you know.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. I said that's (indiscernible) barge. So he said I'm
6 coming to pick you up, I'm coming to pick you up. So he had to
7 pick me up, got on the boat and headed that way, and we were
8 going over, and I said he must have hit a gas jack, man, I
9 think we got a jack fire. And then we started getting closer.
10 Then I told Wayne, I said wait a minute, (indiscernible) jack 2
11 and jack 15. They shouldn't have hit jack 5, and like I say,
12 when we got closer, I said, well, it ain't a jack because I see
13 jack 5 from here. And I said the only thing there is a sales
14 line passing through there, and that's when Rico (ph.) called
15 on the phone and he said (indiscernible) and I say, yeah,
16 that's a sales line. So we went around toward the barge and we
17 seen one of the fellows in the water. So we went toward him.
18 I told Wayne, get on the side so we don't back up on him, and I
19 threw a rope and he caught the rope and we pulled him to the
20 side of the boat, tried to pick him up, and we couldn't pick
21 him up because he was so heavy, you know, it was kind of high
22 there. So I said go to the back of the boat, on the side, and
23 then we'll try to pull you up again. So he did that, and we
24 started pulling him up and Wayne stuck his hand like in his
25 pants pocket and I caught him around his arm and shoulder, and

1 we got him on the boat, and he come on the boat and he was
2 crying, and he was just out of it, you know. Then after that,
3 he tried -- I seen another fellow on the barge over there. We
4 couldn't get to him. I think it was the crane operator. He
5 was kneeling down and I tell him to jump, come on, jump, jump,
6 because the heat was on us right there and I noticed they had
7 two more people in the water right there. We couldn't get to
8 them and then that's when Brian said, man, it's going to get
9 ready to blow up. So I was backing up to go get them, but then
10 something else blew, and he said it was the oxygen bottles and
11 acetylene bottles that went off. And I say (indiscernible)
12 Athena and some of his crew, and they went up and they threw a
13 rope or something, but they couldn't get up close. So they had
14 to back up because of the heat.

15 Q. Uh-huh.

16 A. And then when everything kind of slacked off a little
17 bit, I think they went in there and they grabbed the guy and
18 they put them on the boat and he was face down, you know, I
19 don't know if he was living then, but the other boy, he was
20 kind of moving and kicking and I said you ought to just head
21 for the landing, you know, and they took off for the landing
22 and then we started shutting wells then, and then that's when
23 Rico called and said they needed some pollution booms. So we
24 went to the trailer and picked up the skipper and got me
25 something to drink, and then when they got the pollution boom,

1 they came back and picked me up, and then we finished shutting
2 the wells. But before we went to shut the wells, we went to
3 the barge, where the tug was at, and a guy was telling me, I
4 told him the other fellows would probably be either on the
5 barge or they're on the boat, and then that's when I noticed
6 Timmy on the steps, the guy that drive the boat and seen he was
7 all burned up, you know. And after that, that was it.

8 Q. Okay. Jonathan, could you tell us what the name of
9 the boat was that you were on?

10 A. The Captain Mitch.

11 Q. Captain Mitch. And can you tell us the approximate
12 time when you first noticed the fire or something was wrong?

13 A. I figured between 11:00 and 12:00. I can't say, you
14 know.

15 Q. Okay. And which -- what caught your attention? What
16 did you see initially? Was it smoke or was it fire?

17 A. Just a big ole fire.

18 Q. Fire.

19 A. Blaze almost up to the crane up there, the boom, you
20 know.

21 Q. Can you describe that fire to us a little better, as
22 to what -- was it like throwing black flame or was it a bright
23 orange flame or --

24 A. It was bright orange.

25 Q. Bright orange. Could you tell from that distance

1 where most of the flame was located on the barge?

2 A. The tug and the shack.

3 Q. And you said when you got in closer, you heard the
4 acetylene bottles exploding?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Do you recall --

7 A. When we picked up one of the guys up, the acetylene
8 bottles and stuff was going off.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And the fire looked like it was going towards the
11 crane.

12 Q. Okay. Can you recall how long it took you to -- the
13 Captain Mitch to get from your location to pick the person up?

14 A. I'd say about five minutes.

15 Q. Five minutes. And did you see any other vessels in
16 the area?

17 A. Any other vessels?

18 Q. Any other vessels assisting?

19 A. No. Right after, I guess 15 minutes, then you had
20 boats and all that coming.

21 Q. Were you, were you the first vessel on the scene?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. And a small boat with Billy Kennerson was next?

24 A. Right. They had other boats, fishing boats and all
25 that in the area. I don't know none of them.

1 Q. Okay. And this person, Rico, I guess he was in a
2 control room somewhere?

3 A. Yeah, he's our lead operator.

4 Q. Okay. And where was he located?

5 A. Platform.

6 Q. And how far is the platform away from the accident
7 site to your knowledge, in general I guess?

8 A. Quarter of a mile.

9 Q. Quarter of a mile. Okay.

10 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Liam.

11 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. Do you know who actually put out the fire, what boats
14 would have did that?

15 A. The Tiger. The Cajun, the Tiger, they was putting
16 the fire out, and a small boat, the Yancy O.

17 Q. The name of the boat is the Tiger?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Do you know who owns that boat?

20 A. Tommy Klinefield (ph.).

21 Q. Can you say the last name again?

22 A. Tommy Klinefield.

23 Q. Klinefield. And what was the name of the other boat
24 please?

25 A. The Yancy O.

1 Q. Yancy, Y A N C Y, O.

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. And whose boat is that?

4 A. I call him Small (indiscernible).

5 Q. Okay. What kind of boats were those?

6 A. Tugboat.

7 Q. Tugboats.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Tiger is a jack.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Tier is a jack up boat and
11 the Yancy O is a tugboat.

12 MR. LARUE: Okay. That's all I've got.

13 MR. TURRELL: John.

14 LT. LUFF: I have no questions.

15 MR. TURRELL: Athena?

16 MR. LEE: I have no questions.

17 MR. TURRELL: Brian.

18 MR. OSBORN: I don't have any questions at this time.

19 BY MR. TURRELL:

20 Q. Okay. Mr. Prince, you understand -- is there
21 anything you'd like to add, anything that's jogged your memory
22 at all?

23 A. That's it.

24 Q. You've been very helpful, and will you acknowledge
25 that this is recorded, and we'll end the interview?

1 MR. LARUE: Just --

2 MR. TURRELL: One more. Liam.

3 MR. LARUE: One more.

4 MR. TURRELL: Go ahead.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. Do you remember the spuds when you got over there to
7 the boat? Do you remember seeing the spuds at all?

8 A. I'd be lying to you if I tell you. We were just
9 trying to get the ole boy out of the water.

10 Q. And how close do you think you were able to get to
11 the, to the barge before it got too hot?

12 A. I'd say damn near 150 yards at least. It was just
13 too hot.

14 Q. Okay.

15 BY MR. SCHWARTZ:

16 Q. Jonathan, when you got -- this is Harry Schwartz with
17 Gulfport. When you got to the barges, were they separated?

18 A. No, they wasn't separated but Brian told me the guy,
19 the crane operator, the one that, you know, died, he said he
20 was trying to untie. He untied one end but he couldn't get to
21 the other end. That's what Brian told me, the guy we picked up
22 out of the water.

23 Q. And Brian being the survivor from Athena?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Thank you, Jonathan.

1 MR. OSBORN: I have one question.

2 MR. TURRELL: Brian Osborn.

3 MR. OSBORN: This is Brian Osborn with Gulfport.

4 BY MR. OSBORN:

5 Q. When you pulled Brian out of the water, did he make
6 any comments? Can you tell us what he said? Did he say
7 anything to you?

8 A. I just asked him, I said what happened, did you drop
9 the spud on something and he said the cable just popped, and
10 the spud went down, you know. I was trying to see if they were
11 dragging it or what, but he said the cable popped and the spud
12 went down. That's what he told me.

13 BY MR. TURRELL:

14 Q. Did you ask him or did he tell you?

15 A. No, I asked him.

16 Q. And that was aft spud. Did he tell you it was the
17 aft spud or just told you a spud?

18 A. The back spud.

19 MR. TURRELL: Dana Lee.

20 MR. LEE: Yes.

21 BY MR. LEE:

22 Q. When you pulled up to the boat -- this is Dana Lee
23 with Athena Construction. When you first pulled up to the
24 barge and you saw Mr. John, the operator, and how many other
25 people did you see on the barge?

1 A. I just see John on the piling barge. I didn't see
2 him on the crane barge. I seen (indiscernible) right there by
3 the crane barge in the water, Kenny Rink and Rocky, at the
4 time.

5 Q. Did you see anybody else towards the back of the
6 barge or anything?

7 A. I didn't see nobody else.

8 BY MR. TURRELL:

9 Q. I just want to get straight who you saw on the piling
10 barge. You said John was on the piling barge?

11 A. Yeah, the crane operator.

12 Q. The crane operator. And who you saw in the water?

13 A. Kenny Rink and Rocky. I call him Rocky.

14 Q. Right. Okay. And who did you see -- you saw the
15 captain on the tugboat?

16 A. No, I seen him afterwards. After we went back to get
17 the pollution boom, that's when I seen him.

18 Q. Okay. So you didn't see him the first time?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. Were you in position to see him where you saw him
21 later? In other words, did you look at -- when you first came
22 up to the barge, and saw the location where the captain was
23 later on, was he there --

24 A. When I went up, I didn't know it was him until I
25 looked back and I said, man, and then I asked the guy on the

1 jack up, and he said, yeah, that's Timmy.

2 Q. Okay.

3 MR. TURRELL: Liam.

4 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. Was the barge still on fire? Was the tugboat still
7 on fire when you went back with the boom?

8 A. It wasn't on fire. It was just smoking coming.

9 Q. Do you know how much time had elapsed between when
10 you were first there and you came back and it was out?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. About how much time?

13 A. I'd say -- I don't know because I went back to the
14 trailer for a little while, when they went back to get the
15 pollution boom loaded up, you know.

16 Q. So about 30 minutes.

17 A. I'd say 30, 40 minutes.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. TURRELL: Brian.

20 BY MR. OSBORN:

21 Q. Did you trip to the north end to the Bay Junction at
22 anytime?

23 A. Right, I went to the north end to the Junction.

24 Q. Yeah, Bay Junction.

25 A. Right. I went over there and then me and Wayne

1 didn't know exactly which valve had to be shut, but they have
2 checks in the line over there. That's when Charlie and them
3 were leaving to go back to fuel charter and he said he was
4 going to go shut it. So --

5 Q. Okay.

6 BY MR. TURRELL:

7 Q. So you went to the north Bay Junction, but someone
8 else ended up shutting it.

9 A. Yeah, they said they was going to shut that down.

10 Q. Is it a common practice when there's an emergency in
11 the field like this, you guys seem to react pretty well. You
12 seem to like know which valves to shut off?

13 A. Yeah, I know mostly the valves to shut off, but that
14 was Chevron's stuff and in the oil field, I knows all that.

15 Q. Okay. So can you tell me which valves you ended up
16 shutting off?

17 A. I shut all the valves off on the wells.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We were shutting the wells, shut gas valve, shut the
20 wing valves.

21 Q. Can you tell me just roughly, ballpark, how many
22 valves you closed just ballpark? A dozen, two dozen.

23 A. About 60, 70 wells we got in there that we shut down.

24 Q. Okay. So you were taking a boat from (indiscernible)
25 head shutting the valves?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. And how long did that take you?

3 A. A few hours.

4 Q. Okay. Okay.

5 MR. TURRELL: Anyone else? Liam.

6 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

7 BY MR. LARUE:

8 Q. Who do you -- what are you supposed to do if
9 something like that happens out there, even if it was a smaller
10 fire. Are you supposed to call someone?

11 A. I call my boss.

12 Q. Okay. What about, you know, emergency personnel?
13 Who would you call?

14 A. I (indiscernible).

15 Q. And how would you call? Do you have a radio?

16 A. Yeah, we have radios.

17 Q. So you would probably use the radio to call?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They have cell phones. A lot
21 of them do.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. Can you get service out there?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay.

1 BY MR. TURRELL:

2 Q. Okay. Thanks very much for your time there, and this
3 is recorded. If you would just acknowledge this is recorded
4 and I'll stop the interview. Just say, yes, it was being
5 recorded?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You understand that.

8 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
10 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
 Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
 with Natural Gas Line,
 West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
 October 12, 2006
 Interview of Jonathan Prince

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 16, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

MISS MEGAN (TUGBOAT) AND
 ATHENA 106 (BARGE) COLLISION
 WITH NATURAL GAS LINE,
 WEST COTE BLANCHE BAY, LOUISIANA,
 OCTOBER 12, 2006

Docket No.: DCA-07-MM-001

* * * * *

Interview of: HENRY SCHWARTZ

U.S. Coast Guard Station
 Morgan City, Louisiana

Tuesday,
 October 17, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 9:00 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN J. TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN J. TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board
(202) 314-6107

BRIAN CURTIS
Engineering Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN OSBORN
Gulfport Energy
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

JAY THOMAS
Gulfport Energy

THOMAS MARCOTTE
Chevron
Lafayette, Louisiana

TERRY MIRE
Chevron

LT. JOHN LUFF
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety
Morgan City Investigation Division

DANA LEE
Athena Construction
Morgan City, Louisiana

DAVID PATRON
Counsel for Gulfport

NEIL ABRAHMSON
Counsel for Henry Schwartz

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:00 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Good morning. This is Morgan Turrell, National Transportation Safety Board. We're at the Coast Guard, Morgan City, Louisiana. It's 9:00 on October 17th. We're conducting an interview with Mr. Henry Schwartz, of Gulfport Energy, and starting to my right -- would you introduce yourself please?

MR. PATRON: David Patron (ph.), counsel for Gulfport Energy.

MR. ABRAHMSON: Neil Abrahamson (ph.), counsel for Harry Schwartz.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Henry Schwartz.

MR. OSBORN: Brian Osborn, Gulfport Energy.

MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

LT. LUFF: Lieutenant John Luff, L U F F, Coast Guard, Morgan City.

MR. LEE: Dana Lee, Athena Construction.

MR. MARCOTTE: Thomas Marcotte, Chevron.

MR. MIRE: Terry Mire (ph.), Chevron.

MR. THOMAS: Jay Thomas, Gulfport Energy.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB.

INTERVIEW OF HENRY SCHWARTZ

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. Okay. Mr. Schwartz, if you would kindly say your

1 first name and last name and spell them please.

2 A. Henry, H E N R Y, Schwartz, S C H W A R T Z.

3 Q. Okay, sir. How old are you?

4 A. I'm 47.

5 Q. Okay. Sir, what is your current employment?

6 A. I'm contracted back to Gulfport Energy as Production
7 Supervisor.

8 Q. You say you're contracted back, who --

9 A. My actual company is Harkar, H A R K A R, LLC.

10 Q. Are they owned by somebody else?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And what is the term of your contract --

13 A. It's open ended. Nothing written. All verbal.

14 Q. Okay. And how long have you been an employee of
15 Gulfport Energy?

16 A. Five years.

17 Q. Okay. And prior to that, can you give us a little
18 professional history please? Background.

19 A. Total I have 35 years oil field experience with
20 various companies, the last 27, being with Phillips Petroleum
21 in different areas of that company.

22 Q. Okay. And primarily what is your expertise?

23 A. Production.

24 Q. Okay. And can you just describe what production
25 entails for the layperson, what that means?

1 A. It means getting oil out of the ground in the basic,
2 most efficient way and economical as possible.

3 Q. Okay. And what are your day-to-day duties for
4 Gulfport?

5 A. Directing the crews on what I would like for them to
6 accomplish that day.

7 Q. When you say crews, which crews and --

8 A. Well, mostly the contractors working for us.

9 Q. How many contractors are working for you?

10 A. There's about 20.

11 Q. And so how many total employees would that be?

12 A. I don't know.

13 Q. Roughly.

14 A. Maybe 60 at the most.

15 Q. Okay. Henry, can you just give us your -- a brief
16 statement as to what you experienced on Thursday, October 12th,
17 in regards to the explosion of the gas pipeline?

18 A. On Thursday, October 12th, I was in Sulphur,
19 Louisiana, when I received a call from Mr. Osborn stating that
20 we had a fire in the field and if I could start making
21 notifications and see what actually was going on. On
22 completing the call with Mr. Osborn, I called our field people.
23 I asked them how bad was it. They told me it was bad. At that
24 time, I told them to shut the entire field in, and I was headed
25 back, call me as needed.

1 Q. Uh-huh.

2 A. I arrived back at Ivanhoe. I received the call about
3 12:02, something like that. Upon arriving back to Ivanhoe at
4 about 1:35, met with the Coast Guard. At that time, I was
5 informed the fire was out.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. They were in the operation of recovery, trying to
8 search for people, see if they could find them. Met with the
9 Coast Guard. Then we moved over to their command center and
10 continued the process. I was requested to provide divers for
11 the next morning and also some type of hazmat group to make a
12 barge entry within the next couple of hours of the initial show
13 up.

14 Q. Uh-huh.

15 A. The guys called me back around 3:00 and told me that
16 the field was entirely shut in, and that all the wells were
17 sealed and everything.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. By that time, they had determined, they said it was
20 the sales line that had been hit.

21 Q. Okay. What is your relationship with -- how long --
22 your relationship with Gulfport. Is it a day-to-day phone call
23 or is it an hourly phone call? How often are you communicating
24 with Gulfport?

25 A. Anywhere from 30 to 100 times a day.

1 Q. And who do you report to?

2 A. Brian Osborn.

3 Q. To your knowledge, was there any work being done in
4 that particular area on the field?

5 A. To my knowledge, the only thing was that the barge
6 was traveling through that area from tank battery 3 going to
7 Parker 8.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- to drive some pilings to stabilize the rig in
10 place.

11 Q. Okay. And how did you know that?

12 A. Once I got to the scene, at 1:30, I requested
13 information of why the barge was moving, to be brought up to
14 date on what was going on.

15 Q. And who did you get that information from?

16 A. I got that from my clerk and from field personnel.

17 Q. Okay. So you were aware that there was piling work
18 being done in the -- there was supposed to be piling work done
19 at Parker 8? So you knew there was a --

20 A. Once, once -- no, I did not know it that morning. I
21 was supposed to have been off Thursday.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I was on my way to Texas. It's not uncommon for when
24 we move a rig in the field, to come back behind it and drive
25 pilings in the field to stabilize it. It's common practice in

1 our field to do that.

2 Q. Sure. And who do you hired to do this piling work?

3 A. Athena Construction.

4 Q. Okay. Do you hire anyone else besides Athena to do
5 your work for you?

6 A. Yes, we have used in the past a company called Berry
7 Brothers.

8 Q. But currently it's Athena?

9 A. The company, Athena.

10 Q. Athena.

11 A. It has been since the hurricane.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And before that really.

14 Q. Can you give us an idea of how much work Athena does
15 for Gulfport in either broad terms or hours or just give us an
16 idea of the scope of --

17 A. We had between 3 and 4 barges working in the field
18 over the last 12 months, working anywhere from 6 days a week --
19 up to 6 days a week.

20 Q. Okay. Can you give us a brief history about
21 pipelines to your knowledge in that particular site and your
22 knowledge, as much as you can tell us?

23 A. I've always -- the pipeline was always believed to be
24 owned by Chevron and they were the operators of it.

25 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. As far as I knew, I knew the direction of the line.
2 We were informed that it went due west, X number of feet and
3 then turned and went north to the junction as they call it. I
4 think the Bay Junction is their exact terminology.

5 Q. And how would you describe the pipeline to the best
6 of your knowledge, the actual pipe?

7 A. It's an 8 inch line. I verified that. Before I
8 thought it was 6. It is an 8 inch line, concrete coated,
9 running their approximations now for sure is 85 foot to the
10 west. Being in the pipeline meeting, this is how I have this
11 information for sure now, and then turning 11,000 foot to the
12 north, 11,200 something foot to the north.

13 Q. Okay. So it took roughly three hours to shut the
14 field in?

15 A. The entire field only took -- at 2:06 the sales
16 line -- I mean at 12:06, the sales line valve leaving our
17 facility was closed.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. For further safety purposes, with boats and
20 everything running around the field, we shut the entire field
21 in.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. TURRELL: Go ahead, Brian Curtis.

24 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis.

25 BY MR. CURTIS:

1 Q. Good morning, Harry.

2 A. Good morning.

3 Q. It was mentioned in Mr. Dumesnil's interview, the
4 hand, he said that -- I'm not sure if he was on the boat, he
5 said that the Captain Mitch had gone to shut in a valve. Do
6 you have any information on that or what that refers to?

7 A. The field personnel that we have, we have a system in
8 the field of gasless lines and we have main jacks that are
9 stationed around the field that we can run shorter lines from
10 those jacks to the individual wells as they're drilled and when
11 he first saw the fire, he assumed that it was a gas jack that
12 they had hit, and that's what he -- that his first impression
13 was to go shut the gas jacks off. You can shut them off on
14 both sides. If one's damaged in the middle, you can shut the
15 gas supply off on both sides with other jacks. And that was in
16 reference to that.

17 Q. Was he directed to or did he just do that out of his
18 knowledge of the field?

19 A. His knowledge of the field.

20 Q. But in the end, that had nothing --

21 A. Had nothing to do with it.

22 Q. Just informational, the tank battery 3, what do the
23 tank battery define or is that just a geographical term?

24 A. No, it's a facility that has oil and gas separation
25 on it, gravity type separator, that separates the oil and the

1 gas and in this case, there's also another -- it's also an oil
2 separating. This platform does three things but in two
3 separate stages. It breaks the oil away from the gas first and
4 then the liquid -- the liquids away from the gas first, the gas
5 goes down a low pressure gas line to the compressors. The
6 liquids go from there into what we call the free water knock
7 out which in this case was out of service or a heater treater
8 which heats the liquid, to help separation of the oil and gas,
9 a little bit more gas, to separate the oil and water. The
10 water goes down one line, the oil goes down another line to
11 tank battery 1D.

12 Q. Okay. And the other one is Parker 8. They were
13 going to Parker 8.

14 A. They were going to Parker 8 which is a drilling rig.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have.

17 MR. TURRELL: Dana.

18 MR. LEE: Yes.

19 MR. TURRELL: Dana Lee.

20 MR. LEE: On the Captain Mitch it was Jonathan
21 Prince, the Grasso employee, that was going to shut the jacks
22 off, not Mr. Dumesnil himself.

23 MR. CURTIS: That's correct. I'm sorry if I referred
24 to that, I'm sorry.

25 MR. TURRELL: Thanks. Liam.

1 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

2 BY MR. LARUE:

3 Q. You direct the crews on what they do on a day-to-day
4 basis. Did you direct the crews on this particular day?

5 A. No, I did not.

6 Q. You mentioned that you received a call from
7 Mr. Osborn about making notifications.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. Is that according to some sort of a plan you have
10 or --

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Would you describe that plan for me?

13 A. It's a facility response plan. I think we're getting
14 a copy of it for you at this time.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Mr. Osborn is not totally familiar with all of the
17 notifications. I have a card in my pocket that I carry with me
18 all the time, and he was going to handle the other aspects of
19 it, and I started the notification aspects, and really I, I --
20 at that time, I had called my clerk and told my clerk, since I
21 was driving, for him to start doing all the notifications. So
22 I mean I gave him the list of who to call.

23 Q. Okay. Do you have a set list of people you're
24 supposed to notify?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Do you have any other responsibilities under the
2 plan?

3 A. It's a general plan. If it's a fire, try to isolate
4 it. If it's too big to put out, you know, make sure you kill
5 the source and kill the fire, and it's quite a few pages long
6 to explain the whole thing to you. It tells you what to do in
7 the case of an oil spill, who to notify, how we should handle
8 it, by shutting it in, booming it if necessary, and all of
9 that.

10 Q. I just want to confirm, when you got to Ivanhoe, at
11 around 1:30, the fire was out?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. And you were asked to get together some sort
14 of a hazmat crew?

15 A. I was -- through the balance of the day, I was
16 requested by the Coast Guard to have divers set up and hazmat,
17 OSRO, and all of that, when we got there.

18 Q. Who did you get for hazmat?

19 A. B&B. And that wasn't until that evening when the
20 state police said the emergency was over, and they would not
21 enter the barge.

22 Q. The state police would not enter the barge?

23 A. No.

24 Q. So --

25 A. They would not come back the second day --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- to enter the barge.

3 Q. What exactly did they do, B&B?

4 A. They did a hazmat entry into the tool section of the
5 Athena 106, and B&B was put under the direction of the Coast
6 Guard that was on scene on the barge. In fact, them and Cal
7 Dive (ph.), I just turned them over to the Coast Guard to use
8 as they deemed necessary.

9 Q. Do you know if they created any sort of report from
10 their work on the barge?

11 A. I have not received anything from B&B. Cal Dive, we
12 have their dive report here.

13 Q. Okay. I think that's all I've got for now. Thank
14 you.

15 LT. LUFF: John Luff, Coast Guard.

16 BY LT. LUFF:

17 Q. You said that the line was an 8 inch pipeline, it was
18 a sales line.

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. And what specifically did it run from?

21 A. It ran from our sales platform -- well, it ran from
22 Gulfport's sales platform to the Bay Junction to tie in which
23 ties in with a sales line from Vermillion Bay, and this is all
24 a gathering system.

25 Q. And the person, was that a manned platform, that

1 sales platform. That's how it was shut in?

2 A. The gentlemen was there. He was working on the
3 compressors, who shut it in.

4 Q. The compressor, repairman basically --

5 A. No, my operator.

6 Q. Oh, the operator was repairing the compressor?

7 A. The Grasso operator that's contracted by Gulfport.
8 He saw it, came down the steps. He pulled the -- there is a
9 high/low safety pilot on this line.

10 Q. Uh-huh.

11 A. And he pulled the pin so it would shut.

12 Q. Okay. So he didn't receive any notice. He saw the
13 fire and just pulled the pin and shut it in.

14 A. When he walked down the steps to go for assistance,
15 he shut the compressors down. He walked down the steps and he
16 heard the sales meter, we call it singing, making a lot of
17 noise, and he pulled the pin on the SafetyMatic valve.

18 Q. And shutting it in at that, at that one spot, for the
19 compressor, it has to be shut in also at the shore junction as
20 well?

21 A. The entire line, however long it is, 8 miles, 7
22 miles, whatever, would have to be bled down. Shutting it at
23 the Bay Junction would have decreased the amount of gas but --

24 Q. But basically there's like a check valve in the line
25 so that gas can't go back the other way. Like if it was

1 locked --

2 A. This was a bilateral, bidirectional line.

3 Q. So it can go both ways.

4 A. So it can go both ways. And that's because in years
5 past, we used to be a purchaser and not a seller.

6 Q. And you, you were the one who ordered a shut in at
7 the shore facilities?

8 A. I was the one who ordered the balance of the field to
9 be shut in.

10 Q. What are the like usual operating pressure of that
11 line?

12 A. Normal operating pressure is around 700 to 740.

13 Q. And you said -- and when you got to the shore and was
14 told the fire was out, that was just the gas fire, correct?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. The barge and tug --

17 A. They were still working on the --

18 Q. -- were still burning.

19 A. Right. The Cajun Y Line (ph.) was still putting
20 water on the balance of the equipment.

21 Q. Uh-huh. And the, the lines right here, are they
22 tracked on a standard nautical (indiscernible) charts or how do
23 you keep track of where all the lines are in your fields?

24 A. They're not tracked on the chart. This line is
25 because Chevron had put it there. A lot of the field flow

1 lines are in the process of being shot in. Within the past,
2 basically it was from the well to the platform it needed to go
3 to in a straight line.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. It's just a common oil field practice.

6 Q. Okay.

7 LT. LUFF: I have no further questions.

8 MR. TURRELL: Athena.

9 BY MR. LEE:

10 Q. The only question is, who has ownership to that line,
11 the sales line?

12 A. In the process of this investigation, we have found
13 out that it is a 50/50 ownership of the line between Gulfport
14 and Chevron, with Chevron being the operator.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MR. LEE: That's all I have.

17 MR. TURRELL: Chevron? Tom.

18 MR. MARCOTTE: No questions.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions from me either.

20 MR. TURRELL: I have one question. Morgan Turrell,
21 NTSB.

22 BY MR. TURRELL:

23 Q. Were you in communication with Central Boat and/or
24 Athena during the day? After the search and rescue and the
25 emergency response, did you have any communications with

1 Central Boat and/or Athena?

2 A. Not -- telephone only with Central Boat.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And Dana Lee with Athena was standing next to me --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- most of the time until they moved us.

7 Q. Okay. Would you say you have -- did you have any
8 contact with Athena --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- was Dana your primary contact?

11 A. Yes.

12 MR. TURRELL: Brian?

13 MR. CURTIS: I have no questions at this time.

14 BY MR. TURRELL:

15 Q. Is there anything else, Henry, that you would like to
16 share with NTSB about this incident?

17 A. No, like I said, I was not at the location.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. TURRELL: Jay.

20 MR. THOMAS: We just have a statement, that our
21 thoughts and prayers are with the victims' friends and
22 families.

23 MR. TURRELL: Thank you. Are there any other
24 questions?

25 MR. LARUE: Liam Larue, NTSB.

1 BY MR. LARUE:

2 Q. Do you remember what response assets were on the
3 scene when you got there at 1:30 that day?

4 A. OSRO was already there, on their way. They had not
5 arrived yet when I made it. As far as in the field, Cajun Y
6 Line was doing the fire fighting, a boat by the name of Yancy O
7 was also doing fire fighting and rescue. Miss Megan, the fuel
8 boat was doing rescue.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Captain Mitch.

10 MR. SCHWARTZ: Captain Mitch, sorry.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And Miss Joanne.

12 MR. SCHWARTZ: And Miss Joanne, another tugboat. Now
13 those were all at the scene when it started. There were some
14 civilian boats and there was also a seismic company working in
15 the area.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I believe Chevron
17 responded.

18 MR. SCHWARTZ: Chevron responded also.

19 BY MR. LARUE:

20 Q. In what capacity?

21 A. Search and then to -- they actually closed the valve
22 on an off end of the field.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Other than that, our people at the north end of the
25 field closed it down.

1 Q. What is Cajun Y Line?

2 A. Yes. They're out of -- Cajun Elevated Boats is who
3 owns the -- they're little lift boats.

4 Q. Okay. They owned the Motor Vessel Tiger that was out
5 there?

6 A. Right, they owned the motor vessel tiger and the
7 Mr. Cort (ph.) will be the one -- the boat, the lift boat used
8 tomorrow for the dive. We changed. We got a bigger boat.

9 Q. And what's OSRO?

10 A. That was ES&H.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: OSRO, the Oil Spill Removal
12 Organization.

13 MR. LARUE: Okay. Great. All right. Thank you.

14 MR. TURRELL: Any other questions?

15 BY MR. TURRELL:

16 Q. Okay. We'll go ahead and --

17 A. Also, 911 was called immediately and helicopter and
18 ambulances were at the dock.

19 Q. Who called 911?

20 A. My clerk.

21 Q. Do you know --

22 A. I instructed him.

23 Q. Do you know if your clerk was the first person to
24 call 911 or --

25 A. No, I don't know.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. TURRELL: Any other questions?

3 BY MR. TURRELL:

4 Q. Okay. Henry, thanks. Just acknowledge this is being
5 recorded and it's a public statement?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 MR. TURRELL: This ends the interview.

9 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
10 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Miss Megan (Tugboat) and
Athena 106 (Barge) Collision
with Natural Gas Line,
West Cote Blanche Bay, Louisiana
October 12, 2006
Interview of Henry Schwartz

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-MM-001

PLACE: Morgan City, Louisiana

DATE: October 17, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber